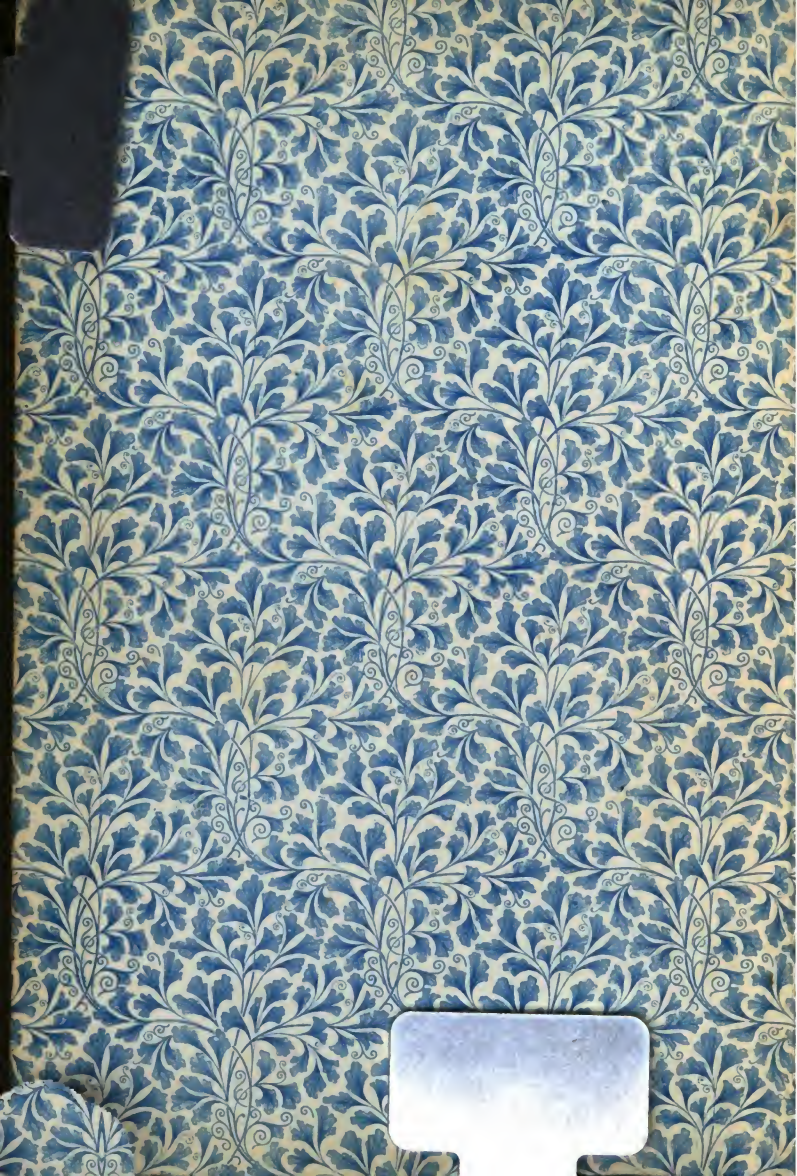
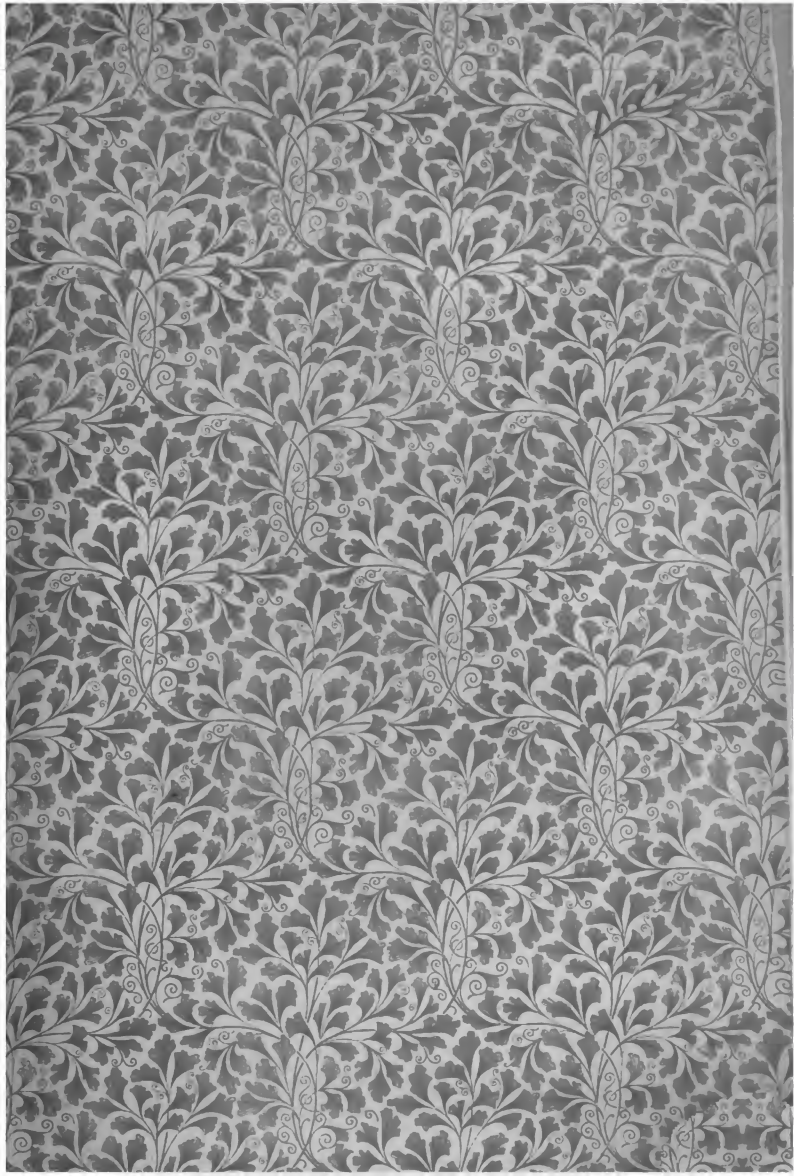


A SCULPTOR: AND OTHER POEMS

Emily Henrietta Hickey







Michael P. Hickey,
21 1892.

A SCULPTOR

&c.

Hickey
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Michael P. Hickey

A SCULPTOR

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

E. H. HICKEY

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1881

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THE
ORIGINAL

TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

Hedges 29 Dec. 1921

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POEMS.

A SCULPTOR.

“A SCULPTOR!” “He left no work to see!”
“A genius!” “Wherein might his genius be?”
“A dead man!” “Reverence for the dead
Must never blind to the truth,” ye said.

62
There was That within him which was divine ;
But his soul was its prison, not its shrine ;
And the fetter'd Thought could never, free,
Go forth in its strength and symmetry,

Though its prison-walls at its yearning cry
Trembled and shook exceedingly.—
Alas for the man whom God bids live,
And keep what he fain would die to give.

Ever with patient hand he sought
To give its due to his lovely Thought ;

And day after day, the story tells,
He workt as one whom a god impels.

One watcht him ever, with eyes so deep
For love that no slumber knew nor sleep :
Fair in body and fair in mind,
True and patient and strong and kind.

The self-same arms had rockt their rest ;
Their lips had drunk from the self-same breast ;
And her mother, dying, had pray'd that she
Would her foster-brother's keeper be.

The woman her life's delight had deem'd
To work for him while the waiting seem'd
So long and dreary ; and, ere 'twas o'er,
The wolf might be standing at the door :
So, having him thus in her heart, she said
The sister should be in the mother's stead.

But, seeing that she was fair and young,
And knowing the stranger's busy tongue,
She pray'd it would please him to confer
The shield of a husband's name on her.

And three days after the burial,
Through a dull rain driving slow and small,
Wet ground underfoot, grey sky overhead,
They walkt to the church and there were wed.

Man and wife, through the chilling rain,
They walkt to the sculptor's house again ;
And the sculptor went upon his way
Just with the heart of yesterday,

As though, in a kind of somnambulism,
A priest had toucht with the sacred chrism
The lady given of God to be
Supreme in her grace and royalty,
And, waking, his brain refus'd to keep
The thought of what he had done in sleep.

Many a year had past away
Since Cecco and Lotta us'd to play
Together 'neath that blue sky of theirs,
And blest and were blest in their lovely pray'rs :—

I think you never would recognise
The baby lovers in any wise
In the quiet woman who goes to-day
Deep-soul'd, deep-eyed, on her daily way,
And the thin, dark man who, people say,
Is that strange Francesco da Fiesole,

Poor fool, who aspires to the artist's meed
But none has seen or shall see, indeed,
The fruit of the travail of his brain—
Thinking and toiling all in vain.

Fair was the woman's face, and sweet
Her voice, and swift were her noiseless feet,
And kind her hands ; but her husband knew
Full little of her the fair and true.

To work when the dawn brake golden-fair ;
At work when the stars of night shone there :
Forwatcht, forwearied at night and worn,
Yet eager to meet his work at morn.

Sometimes she whisper'd, half in fear,
"Rest for a little while, my dear."
But he—"For the soul that God has blest
Only in perfect work is rest."

"Yet rest is the truest work sometimes !
Out of the silence grow new rimes ;
Out of the cool where shadows brood
Leaps up the soul in its strength renew'd."
Then he smil'd, and the smile said wordlessly,
"*Woman, what have I to do with thee?*"

Hours, days, years, swept on, it may be,—
Which he knew not and car'd not, he,—
Art knows not Time but Eternity—
When a wonderful vision, great and sweet,
Came in the silence his soul to greet,
And, daz'd by the glory's sharp excess,
He fell in a deep unconsciousness,

With a cry that struck on her ear alone :
And the woman found him lying prone,
With his head at the base of a block of stone,
A shapeless, loveless thing he wrought,
A cenotaph of his wondrous thought.

She lifted him into the outside air,
And its breeze crept in and out of his hair,
Touching his face with a light caress,
As he lay enwrapt in the silentness.

And, just as the day had kiss'd the night,
He woke, and, with wide eyes full of light,
Lookt up to her face and murmur'd he,
"Thank God that at last through the mists I see
The star of my life arise on me."

Oh, then the delight of sweet surprise
Glow'd in the depths of her tender eyes ;
And something fairer than laughter lit
Her face with a smile most exquisite.

But not for her is that gladness deep,
And not for her are the words that leap
From his spirit's depths—"My glorious Art,
Who hast shrin'd thyself within my heart,

Pardon the weakness of earth that shrank
When the fiery draught of thy life I drank,

And teach my spirit to bear the stress
And awe of thy terrible loveliness :
As when, in the earth-sprung bush there glow'd,
And yet consum'd not its frail abode,
The awful light of the living God."

He rose with a fresh-nerv'd energy,
And a new-born life within his eye—
"Oh, deep in my heart of hearts is writ
'Though the vision tarry, wait for it.'"

So, when she brought him a wine-fill'd cup,
With flashing eyes he rais'd it up,
And dasht the red wine upon the floor,
For the strength of his hope sustain'd him more.

And, laughing, he said, "the gods will bless
My work with an infinite success ;
For the wine I have here pour'd out shall be
Libation paid unto them by me."

But a tear was in the woman's eye,
And the thought swept over her mournfully,
As she lookt where the red stream slowly flow'd,
That its antitype was his heart's best blood.

She watcht outside the door all night,
Nor went away till the dawn of light ;

And ceaselessly on her ear there broke
The ring of her husband's chisel-stroke.

And at dawn when, weary in heart and limb,
She carried the morning meal to him,
The ground was strewn with fragments white,
Where his hand had hewn at the block all night,
The block that seem'd to her eyes to grow
More shapeless and loveless at every blow.

But she saw his eyes as the eyes of a seer,
And he spoke, and her heart stood still to hear,
"It grows and grows beneath my touch—
O Art, thank God that I love thee much!

Not in the dull coarse clay will I shrine
The thought new-born from this soul of mine—
The stately marble's purity
At once shall its glorious temple be.

The beautiful wonder grows and grows—
I carve her as on my sight she rose,
Perfection and light the ministers
To wait on each motion and look of hers.

Ah, no mere lady of perfect mould
In her shall the gazer's eye behold ;

The Godhead's splendour shall surely shine
In the lightest curve and the faintest line ;
And my chisel shall loftily express
That Beauty is one with Holiness."

Oh, full on his face, as the woman went,
There glow'd the light of supreme content ;
And silent she left him as, sharp and clear,
His chisel clasht on her heart and ear.

With quick, lithe step she climb'd the stair
To her room that was very bleak and bare,
Save that a rich fair robe was spread
In mocking splendour upon the bed,
Wrought with a delicate broidery
Of flower and leaf full daintily.

Many and many a weary hour
The woman had toil'd over leaf and flow'r,
For winner she of the daily bread
Wherewith her beloved one was fed.

She did not look on the broidery bright
That strain'd her eyes far into the night,
(Yet Love had made the task seem light)
But, panting as if in struggle fierce,
She tore off that sombre dress of hers,
And once, after years, was fain to free
The storm of her passionate agony.

But the early light of the morning fair
Smote full on a little mirror square,
And the woman's eye was caught, and lo!
She could not but see the lovely show:

The stately throat and the golden hair
That fell on the gleaming shoulders bare,
And the eyes that glisten'd with all the rush
Of tears, and the cheeks with their crimson flush.

She lookt and started amaz'd because
She saw how exceeding fair she was,
And cried with a cry of great despair,
"Alas! in vain am I made so fair,

For his life is utterly perishing
At the feet of that dreadful, shapeless thing
Which never can rise, in face or limb
To smile back the strength of his love on him.

O love, my love, who never wilt know
That I, thy wife, have lov'd thee so,
I would lie death-doom'd at thy sacred feet
To hear thee say but, *I love thee, Sweet,*

Wilt thou not open thine eyes to see
How good perfection can never be
If Nature and Art, which are its source,
Be torn from each other in grim divorce?"

Then sudden, with one great, gasping strain,
The woman regain'd her calm again,
And, when she laid down her work that night,
Her eyes were still and her cheek was white,
And never a face in the universe
More passion-free than that face of hers.

And, strong in the love whose wish and want
Is good for its darling, not to vaunt
Itself as that good's sole ministrant,
"Pray God that my husband see," she said,
"The joy of his work accomplished."

But sometimes the woman would sorely grieve,
As one who cannot, but would, believe :
As one who, in seeking, cannot find,
And dares to hope 'tis that he is blind.

And sometimes she brooded in dull unrest
O'er the knowledge hidden within her breast,
How some in visible form have wrought
The passion and glory of their thought,
While some in their souls, unseen must hold
What never in form can be shown or told.

The studio's door is open'd wide,
And he stands at a veiled statue's side :

The door is open'd wide and free,
For all may enter who choose and see.

As one unto whom the time doth bring
The joyful calm of the finishing,
He stands by the side of the unseen thing ;
Stands calm and still with his face uprais'd,
As if on some light unseen he gaz'd.

His wife in silence holds her place
Close, close to him, with that marble face
As fair as the vision of perfectness
His soul has sobb'd and moan'd to express.

Marble-cold and marble-fair ;
Is she the woman who wrestled there
Last night in the agony of prayer ?
Marble-cold, and marble-pale,
She waiteth the loosing of the veil.

The veil is loost, and the sculptor's eye
Looks round in that moment's ecstasy,
With a dumb appeal for sympathy.
For, as pain dies down when hearts are there
To take and eat of the bitter fare,
So joy is half pain if none may share.

Still are they all for a little space,
And each one gazeth on other's face,

Then back to the thing that stands alone,
A thought—a work—or a block of stone.

A hush—and then, in the murmurs low,
She knows what it needeth not she know—
A march for the dead beat soft and slow ;
For the great dead hope and the man who lies
With death on his heart and in his eyes.

What does it matter, silence or speech ?
For there, on the height he never might reach,
His Thought, unshrin'd in the failure grim,
In terrible pathos looks at him.

The house is silent, the critics thence
Have past with pity and reverence,
And the woman is left alone to keep
Her watch by the man that God lets sleep.

Only once do his lips uncloze
As he lies on her breast in deep repose :
Only the murmur'd name, the dear
Pet-name unheard for many a year,

Lotta!—the dying man to-day
Is Ceccolino again, at play
With his little comrade among the flow'rs
And hopes and joys of the long-ago hours.

"What is the moral?" ye ask me—this
I offer, tell me whether it is.

The earth all quick with the diamond's soul
In its throes oft bears but the formless coal,
So close of kin to the perfect gem
That is meet for a kingly diadem.

"This is no moral! why fail'd the man?
Ay, tell me that, if ye only can.
Why and wherefore I know not, I,
Nor take upon me the mystery
Of things, as if I were God's spy.

Think ye God answers *no* or *yes*
To men as they idly guess and guess,
"If he had lov'd or if—"?—that *If*
Is God's undecipher'd hieroglyph.

TOLD IN THE FIRELIGHT.

AT last, old friend, after all the years of hope that, de-
ferr'd, doth tire

- The heart as surely as pain itself, you are sitting here by
my fire :

'Twas worth the waiting to find your heart the same as
ever still,

Though alter'd much is that dear old face since last we
met, friend Will.

The eyes are as bright as ever they were, but, just about
the mouth,

The lines, not stern, but tenderly grave, tell something of
parted youth :

And your step is slower than us'd to be, and bow'd is
the stalwart form

Which minded us all of a rock that bade defiance to beat
of storm :

And the waves of care have swept o'er your head, and
left, just here and there,

A little streak of their silvery foam on the seaweed brown
of your hair.

But oh ! on your face is the sweetness still that oft is
 wrung out by pain
From natures less noble than yours, as the juice is crusht
 away from the cane.

Both of us, Will, have lov'd ; each sought, in the Spring
 of his life, to be
The Knight of knights in the gentle eyes of the one
 belov'd lady :
Your dream, old friend, was realiz'd in the gift of your
 beautiful one—
To love her made you exceeding glad, to lose her, ex-
 ceeding lone.
I remember the grace of her movements light, and her
 voice as soft as the sigh
Of wind among summer's full-leav'd trees—she was very
 fair to die—
But I think, such sweetness was on her brow, such pure-
 ness on her tongue,
She was lov'd with the mystic immortal love they say is
 death to the young.
Hand in hand together we stood on the still September
 morn
While the reapers' sickles rustled like wind against the
 yellow corn,
Hard by the place of your dove's last nest there under
 the light, loose turf
Whose bending grass should never be stirr'd by wind that
 had moan'd on the surf.

We parted soon for a long, long while : you went to the
morning land
Where Nature spreadeth a daily feast of her lovely things
and grand,
And the spirit of love and of those sweet songs which
lips of the true have sung
Watcht o'er you by night and day and kept the harp of
your life well-strung,
Else how, since grief doth age the heart, can your heart
be so fresh and young?

My story you ask for, old comrade? Well, you shall have
it and welcome too:
I could not have told it in letters, I think, but am glad to
tell it to you,
Face to face and hand to hand this eventide by my
fire,
Here, as so often I've wanted you with restless, great
desire.
Is it not strange how the certain hand of Time can
utterly smooth
Down into calm the passionate storms that trouble the
heart of youth?
The wine that, in drinking, was bitterest, is mixt in
remembrance with myrrh—
So, Will, it does not hurt me now to think or to speak of
her.

Calm on my life's love-threshold she stood, with the
forehead smooth and square
That gleam'd like a silver star against the drifts of her
cloud-like hair ;
And cheeks too young, too young to be so utterly pale
and grave,
And lips where delicate pathos lay at the heart of each
smile they gave.
A still, calm presence that, moonlike, wrought such a
passionate tide in my breast,
That to me the love which I priz'd so dear was only a
name for unrest.
My whole life gather'd up at once its trouble and joy and
desire,
And laid itself down at her feet and pour'd out its strength
in words of fire.
At first, as she listen'd, those lips of hers that stately
were, but mild,
Curv'd into a pitying, quiet smile, as if for a wayward
child ;
But soon, with the force of my pleading strong, there
came a look in her eyes,
As if she were gazing back to the past with its mazes
and mysteries.
And when I ceast, she droopt her lids, and the few, low
words she said
Were utter'd so faintly, I only caught the sound of the
last one—*dead* !

Then I was dumb, and it seem'd as if a many ages swept
Over my life that, trembling there, its sorrowful silence
kept.

Was it the ghost of her pain or else the wraith of mine
that had come

And stood, a shadow between us two, in the shadows of
evening's gloom ?

She laid on my arm a kind calm hand, and spoke to me,
with the grace

Of her womanhood's pitying tenderness soft on her
beautiful clear-cut face :

Just in the very fewest words and the simplest ones, she
told

A story old and common enough, and as sad as common
and old :

Something of poverty—parting—and then the struggle
for daily bread

In a far-off land, and at last the news that crusht her
hope—he was dead.

Ah ! would that I never had spoken the words that I
spoke out then to her

Whose love and pain should have been to me the veriest
barrier—

“ Hate me,” I said, “ if you will, if you will, so you let
me kneel and adore

The light that shall be my star of stars for ever and ever-
more.”

Commonplace words enough they sound, but nothing is
commonplace

To a woman who sees a man's whole heart leap out to
her in his face :

And her voice was softer than even its wont, and her eyes
had tears unshed—

“ I never shall love again, but yet—if you will, so be it.”
she said.

Then I fain had drawn her close to the heart that would
shelter hers for ever,

But she shudder'd, as if with pain or cold, and pray'd of
me just to leave her,

Leave her a little while ; she would strive her woman's
duty to do ;

Well she knew me and trusted me ; she call'd me a good
man and true ;

Knew that I lov'd her ; but all was strange and new, and
the crisis of life

Was come unto her who had surely thought she never
should be a wife.

And we parted then ; but all night long, with a weight as
heavy as lead,

It lay on my heart and haunted me, or waking, or sleeping,
—*Dead.*

The days past on and a tender calm that was almost
like to peace,
Fell on my life from that life of hers and bade its unrest
to cease :
Her life so full of the duties fair that were order'd smooth
and even,
To know her was beauty and grace and good, and to love
her was very heaven.
Yet sometimes, despite, in my heart of hearts, a fathom-
less longing would rise
For storms and sunshine instead of the blue of those
fair, untroubled skies ;
For the delicate hearth-fire to cherish and tend, instead
of the distant star ;
For the beam of the lesser light close by, instead of the
greater afar.

Well, seeing the time was passing fast in that gentle light
and clear,
I askt her when should my hope be crown'd, and she
pray'd me for a year,
And I thought in that year perhaps, perhaps, the waters
of time might sweep
Lethe-like over her heart and drown all pain in a wake-
less sleep.
We said we would part for that one year, and I left our
country's shore
Not to see her again till the time I never should leave
her more :

But oh! with the look in her quiet eyes there fell a
shadow on me,
And I thought of the world-sick preacher's words that
all is but vanity.

The year was over and gone at last, and both of us bound
for home ;

I and another, an artist-friend I had made while I stay'd
at Rome.

A genial, open-hearted man, who was coming home to
claim

The right to give to his best-belov'd the gift of the ring
and name.

He told me more than I told him, Will, but somehow, it
seem'd to strike

A chill on my heart that our hope should be so like and
yet so unlike.

He told me about a morning bleak in the time of early
snow,

When he parted from her, his lady dear, just five long
years ago,

Knowing not when they should meet again, but strong in
the trust and truth

That keep the flowers of the heart so fresh in the dew
and beauty of youth.

Ay, the times change and we with them, but he knew he
should find her the same

In heart and soul as the last sweet time he had heard her
name his name.

Never a letter had past between them : her kinsfolk and
friends disallow'd

The trothplight, for he was poor and young and they
were poor and proud.

He had struggled hard and overcome by the force of that
which gains

The crown and the palm—the patient “*power of taking
infinite pains ;*”

And when, at last, success had come, he had hugg'd with
a miser's grasp

The gold that was bringing him every day more near to
the deathless clasp

Of her virgin-hand, and the tender light of her lustrous
violet eye

For evermore and for evermore—it was wonderful
ecstasy.

He pac'd the long deck to and fro, and lookt so blest
and proud

In his love and trust that I know not how I utter'd my
thought aloud,

With a touch of cynicism that now I think of, Will, with
pain,

As I said, “But how if you lose, good friend, where you
only think to gain?”

He stopt his walk and lookt at me with the look of per-
fect calm

That comes to the face when the life is tun'd to the pitch
of love's great psalm ;—

“ Ah, yes, I have thought of that before ; she may be
lying low
With violets quick on her dear dead breast ; God's will
be done, if so ;
Or else she may have thought me dead, and given her-
self to one
As true and loving as I could be ;—to say God's will be
done
Truly were harder if so it were ; in the book of the heart
I have read
More bitter is grief for the living lost than ever it is for
the dead.
All's in God's hands ; but somehow I feel so strong in
my love and trust
I think that He will not suffer this hope of mine to
crumble to dust.
She cannot else be lost I know ;—there's a word that
Society uses
When a frivolous woman plays with a heart as long as
her fancy chooses,
Then casts the poor plaything away for others to toy with,
unless, indeed,
It be too much broken for that, and cares not and takes
not the slightest heed—
Flirting they call it—but she, yes, she is so pure and true
and high,
As far above that unwomanly shame as a star in its depth
of sky,

And all that is lofty and beautiful in her is so surely
blent,
My treasure perhaps may be lost to me, but it cannot
have thus been spent."

I had seen her again, my statue-love, she had met me
with never a touch
Of true-love joyaunce and eager bliss, and my whole
soul crav'd for such :
I had lookt in vain, in vain, for the crimson beacon of
love on her cheek,
As a watcher looks with longing eyes to the East for the
morning-streak.
Tender and meek as of old she was, and I thought " Has
she come to forget
The Past with its sweetness and bitterness, and will she
love me yet ? "
Such women never forget, albeit, outliving their agony,
From their sweet souls is born the grace of infinite
charity.

We were sitting together one eventide ; her hand lay
light in mine,
The quiet hand that, to-morrow morn, was to wear my
marriage-sign :
I was reading a quaint old ballad aloud that pleas'd my
lady much,

When we heard a footstep—an open'd door—and she
drew her hand from my touch,
And lifted her eyes—and then—O Will !—with a cry, on
my heart that rang
As a joybell might on a doom'd man's ear who waits for
his death, she sprang,
With a deer-like bound in the eager joy that quiver'd
through all her frame
To her home on his breast for evermore, and he kiss'd
her and nam'd her name.

Only a moment thus they stood, forgetting all but the joy
Of a love whose infinite sweetness and strength nor time
nor pain could destroy,
And then she started back from his arms with a glorious
crimson glow,
Love's banner, flasht out over her face from her chin to
her very brow ;
So was the wonderful loveliness now full-lit by the light of
the human,
Grown beneath love's true hand at once to the fairest
beauty of woman.
My heart sent forth a desperate cry as wordless I past
from the door,
Like the last long wail of one who is drown'd in sight of
the ship and the shore.

There is the end ;—there's a grand old truth that never
grows dull or trite,
All that God does, and the way He does it, is sure to be
wise and right.
And I call it nothing but casting reproach on Him and
His perfect plan,
Who made the love of man for woman, the love of woman
for man,
When those who have lost that bliss, or those to whom
it has been denied,
Sneer at the holy name of love and smother with selfish
pride
The seeds of the sacred flowers God holds to be given
in service meet
When twin'd for a darling's brow or laid at tir'd
humanity's feet.
And life has autumn and winter joys left yet, and I love
to see
Her little children, whom I had hop'd should be mine,
around my knee :
Ay, give me your hand, old friend, true friend—there
was once a tender and true man
Like you, who gave to his friend a love *passing the love
of woman.*

MARGARET, A MARTYR.

THE dying man tost from side to side ;
 The nurse stoopt down in the twilight dim,
 And smooth'd his brow to quiet him :
 " He may dream of his mother's hand," she said,
 " By the touch of mine on his restless head."
 But he, with eyeballs staring wide,
 Clutcht at that gentle hand of hers,
 And moan'd, " O voice of the sea, the sea !
 The curse of its voice ! the curse ! the curse !"

The house where he lay was far enough
 From the roaring and beating of the sea ;
 Far away from the blast, said she,
 That shrieks on the foam-fleckt crags. But he
 Answer'd in accents hard and rough,
 " Woman, I tell you wave on wave
 Dashes along with a dread white crest,
 Taking its spoil of my last long rest ;
 I shall hear the sound in my very grave."

Pale was the nurse with wordless fright :
All the seeming-endless night
She had listen'd thus to his agony—
"Terrible, pitiless, ghastly sea !
She is drown'd, drown'd, drown'd, I tell you ; She :
I lov'd and slew her, lov'd and slew !
Her eyes were bluer than the blue
Of the sea, and truer than the true
Of its tide ; and I slew her by the sea."

"Is he mad, or does he dream?" thought she.
"Forbid it God that true it be."

"You don't believe, or you half believe?
I am quite calm now : will you listen to me ?
Think you are going to receive
My last confession—is that the phrase ?—
I'm telling you now because the day's
Adawn and I'm wearied out with pain,
And I think it must all be o'er at night.
No secret, child : it's ten years quite
Since I stood in the dock and they maunder'd on,
And said I was mad ; and they shut me up
In a madhouse, not to come out again
Till her Majesty's pleasure—Give me the cup—
That's good—thanks, thanks ; but, five years gone,
They sent me out on my pleasant way,
Old, and wrinkled, and bent, and gray ;
(But I'm only forty, Nurse, to-day !)

And every one's dead—there were only two
To die, two only, Maggie and Hugh."

Soft she said, "Let the dead past go !
God is tender and good, we know ;
And it says in the Book, more white than snow
The blackest soul may be again ;
That *Blood* blots out of blood the stain."

"Poor little nurse-evangelist !"
He said, with a lip-curve sadder to see
Than eyes all veil'd in thick tear-mist,
"No good in preaching like that to me.

"'Why did I moan all through the night ?'
'Twas a kind of physical need to moan
And talk of the sea and her, that's all :
But I'm not a penitent, to delight
Your good lean priest, and have him fall
On his knees a-thanking God : I groan
And sigh and shudder, from weakness, Nurse,
And not from penitence or remorse.

Hugh and I were early reft
Of the good gold, parents' love, and left
To struggle on as best we might,
Win or fail in the great life-fight.
How could he fail? He workt and plann'd,
True of heart and true of hand ;

Builder and architect, so he.
He us'd to laugh and say to me
'Twas I must write the family name
High on the walls of the Temple of Fame.

I was a painter ; one of those
Who were seal'd of the tribe pre-Raphaelite :
He thought me the greatest of the lot :
" Did any one else ? " Well, I suppose,
Not many set me on such a height
As Hugh and she—but it matters not.

Hugh was one of your grandly made
Fellows, all strength of body and mind ;
Tall and broad, none could make him afraid ;
With a powerful arm and a manful tread,
And a heart that was kin to all mankind.

She—well, she was shy as sweet,
And, because she lov'd my brother, not me,
Would look not up at the sound of his feet,
But blush till she grew thrice fair to see,
A crimson blush that pal'd at tip
Of her wonderful little delicate ears
To the tender pink the young dawn wears :
And then she would talk to me and laugh
The loveliest laughter, till I went half

Mad for her love, and had let all slip,
All that I ever had deem'd of worth,
Anywhere, everywhere, Heaven or Earth,
For the light of her eye and the smile of her lip.

I can be just now and analyse
It all ; look on with another's eyes,
And see how Maggie Rivers thought
She might be just a sister to me,
Because as a lover she lov'd me not—
Maggie ! Maggie ! the sea ! the sea !
The white waves howl and leap around me !
I'm a fool, Nurse—there—so let me be.

Hugh came to me one day and said,
“Evan, Maggie has promist to be
The nearest of all the world to me.”
And I lookt up with a sick white smile—
“Joy to you, my brother !” while
My heart for a moment felt like dead.
But life came back with the horrible feel
Of a million little pricks of steel ;
And then one awful grip of pain
Caught me, and made me mad, mad, mad—
That is the thing they call'd me when
I stood in the dock before those men—

But, that day, I heard the myriad
Spring-sounds upon the delicate air

That was round the martlet's procreant nest,
And I saw the sights that, everywhere,
Made up one sight of beauty ; and, blest
I saw my brother standing there
With the head of the Spring-goddess on his breast ;
And he was the Spring-god, and all was fair.
Should I remember if I had been mad ?
Should I remember ? There's the test.

He said—what was it he said ?—I know—
“ Brother and sister,”—and, in the glow
Of beauty, hers and his, when he bade,
She lifted her lips to mine, and I took
Their joy that once, and the whole earth shook
And reel'd, and I stood there, blind, deaf, dumb,
Only knowing a belt of fire
Was round my heart, and hell was come
In the heaven that was my soul's desire.”

He ceast a moment and, in the lull,
Came over the nurse a wonderful
Horror and shuddering as, all amaz'd,
Upward her frightened eyes she rais'd.
And from the sick man's lips a half
Sob came that was like a birth-chok'd laugh.
Then said she, “ Let me pray, for the pow'r
Of the Evil One is on you this hour.”

Then roll'd out the sneer-set words of his,
With a terrible mocking emphasis ;
" Don't you know it's the fashion to call it a lie,
The evil's personality ?
A dream of the foolish times mediæval
To cross and cry for fear of the devil ?
What is it then ? an essence ? a thread
From a queer kind of loom, that, wov'n in your stuff,
Will warp it and spoil it ?—That's enough.
Perhaps I shall know to-night—well said—
Absurd polemics, good Nurse ! pshaw !
You look at me with a grim white awe
In your face. What care I ? Not a straw.
I can meet this death—must—face to face."

But the nurse, as she strove in vain to chase
The horror back from her eyes to her heart,
Said, with an irrepressible moan,
" Oh, keep your story for God alone !"

" God !" said he, as he jerkt apart
Her hands, pray'r-claspt unconsciously,
" What have I got with God to do ?
I mean the story only for you.
Sit there still and listen to me.

A full month's time was yet to be
Ere she came, array'd in bridal trim,

To make the house a home for him ;—
Do you hear it now ? *Will* you hear that sea ?

I was a painter : I told you this ?
Well, how I painted my masterpiece
Is yet to be told. Did I paint it, though,
Or only sketch it ? I hardly know ;
I think it was painted : wasn't the gown
Short, scant-folded, of russet brown ?
What does it matter ? leave it so.

You know the story of Margaret,
The girl who hugg'd the Covenant
Close to her heart and died—and yet
What did she die for ? Truth or Cant ?
My Margaret—no, not Maggie, no—
But Margaret Wilson, mine, I say,
Not Scotland's Margaret, nor History's, she
Who came,—was it in a dream ?—to me,
With a steady step, in the early glow
Of her young life's just unopened May ;
She died for Truth, or died to be true—
That's better, I think ; and Maggie too,
She died—was that for the Covenant ?—
No, I'll not stop ; my brain is clear
Though they call'd me mad—but—things that haunt—
Maggie, Margaret,—Nurse, you *shall* hear.

They drest her up one party night
In a Scotch girl's dress and fetcht a stake

And bound her, waist, wrists, ankles, tight :
And she lookt a Martyr for Truth's sake.
And this was done for the brief delight
Of folk who had come to merrymake.
But she—did the ghost of the dead Scotch girl
Come back to earth for a little space,
And shine through the flesh of Maggie's face,
And tell us that evil were vain to unfurl
The flag ? or did That for which men die
Or live, look out through that body of hers ?
I know not ; I only knew 'twas I
Must shew her thus to the universe.

A three-hours' ride from where we dwelt
The sea beat high upon a shore
Where, stark and strong like giants of yore,
Rose the great rocks the sea would pelt
With foam in its grim horse-play, or roar
At the foot of, until one, gazing, felt
A desperate wish to leap to its breast
And ride, or be tost, on its mighty crest.
Often I us'd to visit that beach
And look and think, until it seem'd
My Margaret Wilson stood there too,
She and I, and never a word of speech
Upon my lips or hers ; and the blue
Great sky was above, and, underneath
Our feet was—was it the sea or death ?

And the wild gulls flap their wings and scream'd,
And the sea came up and toucht her feet ;
And I saw them come to her and urge—
What? the pity of it? the dear life's sweet?
And I saw them go and the sweeping surge
Swirl round her limbs and then retreat ;
And again and again they offer'd—what?
Life? It was Life the girl had got.
And the sea came up with no rebuke
From the lips of any thaumaturge,
And swept her into heaven—

I look

And see a face a moment bare
From the glaucous depths, and I see the hair
Float out like trails of the brown sea-weed.

Am I mad, mad, mad? No, Nurse, indeed :
'My pulse as temperately as yours
Doth beat.'—That's Hamlet, Hamlet the Dane
With a bee in his bonnet ; so, that's plain.—

Now, if I only could have a weed
And a man to talk with—that's what cures.
Madness! Death's coming up like the tide,
And pity it were to miss the end
Of a grand sensational tale because
The man who was telling the tale, my friend,
Let his jaw drop, eyes stare, and died—
So much for Buckingham—That's where I was.

We came down to this beach, we two ;
Maggie, not Margaret, Maggie and I,
Hugh's Maggie, who was to sit to me
For my picture's sketch by the old gray sea ;
The picture that should proclaim me him
Who had read God's runes and writ them for men
In language that whoso ran might read,
Clear and plain, not vague and dim.
What shall be the rune-reader's meed ?

I tied her fast to the stake I had set ;
I bound her, ankles, and wrists, and waist ;
And the evil tide was far, far out,
It would not turn for a good while yet.
The low little rocks were slimy and green,
And the ugly barnacles could taste
The air that was blowing light about
Her snood-bound hair : I lookt, and lost
Myself in a sort of maze between
Sea and sky ; it was strange, so lone a place,
So drear and wild, on the English coast.
You never saw a human face
Down there, nor heard a human voice ;
Though folk in search of the picturesque
Might have here found plenty whereat to rejoice
And set forth, somehow, at easel or desk.

The waves went curling and rippling light ;
But a voice was singing under their foam,

Their laugh-like, delicate, cresting foam,
The psalm-tune—you know it—*Martyrdom*—
The grand old psalm-tune, *Martyrdom*.
She stood and mov'd not : the little white
Clouds tost in the sky like the blue sea's foam.

I said, 'You are mine now, death's or mine ;
Love and wife.' And she lookt at me
To understand ; and I told her all,
Saying, 'Take your choice, my heart or the sea.
Choose and quickly ; no use to call,
For none will hear. Is it I or the brine,
The bitter, deadly glaucous brine ?'

Brevity is the soul of wit ;
Why should I make my story long ?
I know the tide came swift and strong ;
I know no man could fight with it,
And what could a fetter'd woman do ?
Lie and say, 'I promise you
All you wish if you set me free ?'
Or lie to Hugh and God for me ?
That ? She lie ? Do martyrs so ?
Just one exceeding bitter cry
Went from her lips, and then she grew
Quite still, and settled herself to die.

The air was warm, the sky was blue,
And, at first, the sea rose calm and slow.

The shore stretcht out in a headland small,
A 'beaked promontory' small,
Whereon if I stood, I could see her plain.
I climb'd the place : I recall the pain
As I struck my knee against a stone,—
Should I remember that at all
Had I been mad?—The place was o'ergrown
With stubbed heather soft that felt.
I sat me down and lookt. A belt
Of sea had cover'd the barnacles,
And I saw no green slime now ; and bells,
Church-bells, I think, were in my ear.

And she was there, and her face shone clear
As a star within the grisly blue,
And her little snood was loost, and brown
Bright hair was all about her—I knew
And saw, and I left her there to drown.

What is it someone somewhere saith
About being faithful unto death?
Well—well—the native savagery
Of the sea—I told you here the sea
Was wild and strong?—awoke at last,
And a little tempest sang i' the blast,
And grew to a wild roar presently.
And—I saw only the fierce big sea,
With a trail of weed upon its breast ;

And heard the waters moan and roar,
And the cry of the gulls upon the shore ;
And I saw the sun slope to the west,
Saw it or felt—Let be, let be.”

*THE STORY OF ARGALUS AND
PARTHENIA.*

A Transcript from the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, Book I.

WHEN the good king, *Basilius*, come to years
More than decaying, (he was king of all
Arcadia) took *Gynecia* to his wife,
Came with her a young lord nam'd *Argalus*,
Who was her cousin-german ; thither led
By honour partly and the love of her,
And partly by the humour of youth, which aye
Thinks that is good whose good he doth not see.
And in that lord he won so great increase
Of knowledge that, when years were spent, he shew'd
In all his actions such a virtuous mind,
He was *Arcadia's* glory : a gentleman
Rarely accomplisht, excellently learn'd,
Without vain-glory ; valiant too—the earth
Holds not a man that hath perform'd more acts
Heroical than he ; for valour of mind
And strength of body, none to him preferr'd,
If any equall'd ; yet so valiant that

To none he ever durst do injury.
 In 'haviour surely sober, ever wise,
 To musing somewhat giv'n, but ne'er uncourteous ;
 His word led by his thought and follow'd of
 His deed ; more liberal than magnificent.
 In sum, I say, such man was *Argalus*,
 The nicest eye could find no spot in him,
 Unless the over-vehement constancy
 Of spotless love be counted for a spot.

The young lord *Clitiphon*, the king's sister's son,
 (His mother married with good lord *Kalander*)
 Haunted the company of *Argalus*
 More than of any other, and between
 These twain a liking and a friendliness
 Sprang up and brought forth this that you shall hear.

It fell upon a time that *Clitiphon*
 Brought *Argalus* to a great lady's house—
 His father's sister's house he brought him to—
 Who had one child, *Parthenia* ; fair indeed,
 And fairer much her fairness was, ywis,
 Seeing 'twas but a fair ambassador
 Of a fair mind exceeding, full of wit
 Which better lov'd to judge itself than shew,
 Her speech being rare as precious, and her silence
 No sullenness, her modesty sincere,
 And her shamefastness without ignorance.

In sum, if you would praise her, first set down
What is it to be excellent ; this is she.

Now these perfections meeting could not choose
But find each other and delight in that
They found ; likeness of manners surely will
Draw liking with affection ; nor, indeed,
Do actions always cross with reason ; in short,
They lov'd, though, for a while, the fire of *Love*,
Hope's fanning wings cut off, was blown for them
With a wild wind even by *Despair* himself.

Long while *Demagoras* had woo'd the maid ;
A suitor mighty in wealth and pow'r, and proud
Thereof, and stout, who, save himself, lov'd none.
(He lov'd her for the sake of self-delight.)
And, following vehemently his desire,
His riches gilding over all his faults,
Parthenia's mother gave him her consent,
And, using with her child authority,
Had made her yield thereunto : not because
She lik'd that choice, but her obedient mind
Not yet had taken on it to make a choice.

And now the assurance-day drew very near,
When my lord *Clitiphon* brought *Argalus*,
Perchance that he might see so rare a sight
As she by all well-judging eyes was judg'd.

But though few days before the assurance-time
 Appointed were to pass, yet Love, who saw
 He had a journey very great to make
 Within a time so short, so hasted him,
 That, ere her word could to *Demagoras*
 Tie her, her heart vow'd her to *Argalus*,
 And he fear'd nothing but the missing her,
 As she desir'd o'er all the having him.
 And when the time came that *Demagoras*,
 Full of proud joy, thought to receive the gift
 Of her sweet self, she, very resolute,
 Yet grieving that she must refuse, said thus,
 She rather would be bedded in her grave
 Than wedded to the lord *Demagoras*.

And strange unto her mother seem'd the change,
 Strange as displeasing, and all ways she tried
 That ever mother hard of heart could use
 Upon a humble child in whom the one
 Resisting pow'r was love : but yet, the more
 The maid defended did the mother grow
 Obstinate in assault ; and, finding now
 That *Argalus*, standing between, eclips'd
Parthenia's shining from *Demagoras*,
 She sought by all means to be rid of him,
 Employing him in dangerous enterprise
 As ever step-dame *Juno Hercules*.

But, as she tried his virtue, purer still
 It grew, and all things done to overthrow
 His virtue set him up on honour's highth.
 Yet struggling, seeing she would have her will,
 And shew authority, as *Argalus* grew
 In virtue and strength she hated him the more,
 Thinking his conquest only conquer'd her ;
 And therefore, still employ'd him in attempts,
 More and more dangerous, and, the meanwhile,
 Using all possible extremities
 On her fair child, that she might make her give
 Herself to her direction. Hard to judge
 If he in doing, or she in suffering,
 Shew'd forth affection's greater constancy ;
 For rather did the world occasions want
 Than *Argalus* the heart to go through them :
 So with *Parthenia* ; malice sooner ceast
 Than her unchanged patience. Then, in sooth,
 By treason foul *Demagoras* and the dame
 Would fain have made away with *Argalus*,
 But he, with courage and with providence
 So past o'er all, she took a spiteful grief,
 And her heart brake withal and so she died.

But now *Demagoras* assur'd himself
Parthenia free would ne'er be bound to him ;
 And, hearing thus much from her steadfast lips,
 He, not more wishing his own happiness

Than envying *Argalus*, whom, with narrow eyes
 He saw e'en ready to enjoy the bliss
 Of full desire, so strengthen'd his conceit
 With all the mischievous counsels love disdain'd
 And envious pride could give : and so the wretch,
 Taking the time when *Argalus* was gone
 Hence to his country, gone to fetch his friends
 For honouring of the marriage, (her consent
 Joyfully given thereto), the wretch, I say,
 Desiring privily to speak with her,
 With force unmerciful, her too weak arms
 In vain resisting, rubb'd upon her face
 A horrible poison, the effect whereof
 Was never leper lookt more foul than she.

This coming unto *Clitiphon's* father's ears,
 The good old *Kalander* of famous name,
 Her uncle, he made such means *Demagoras*
 Was banisht from the land on pain of death.
 Who, hating the punishment where the fault he should
 Have hated, join'd himself with all his pow'r
 Unto the *Helots*, rebels 'gainst the State ;
 And they, right glad to have among them one
 Of such authority, made him general ;
 And under him these *Helots* did commit
 The most outrageous villainies a base herd
 In desperate revenge can think or do.

But in a little space came *Argalus* back,
 Poor gentleman ! having within his heart
 Her image fair, and promising his eyes
 The uttermost of their felicity,
 When they—none other dar'd to tell it him —
 Were the first messengers of their own woe.

And who can tell the grief of both of them
 When he did know her ? At the first, indeed,
 He knew her not, and neither, at the first,
 Could knowledge possibly have virtue's aid
 So ready as not faintly to lament
 The loss of such a jewel ; so much the more
 That skilful men sadly assured them
 'Twas past the healing : but, within a while,
 His truth of love and virtuous constancy
 Shining through foulest mists took such full hold
 Of *Argalus*, he began to comfort her
 With comforts such as witty arguments
 May give adversity ; nor only this,
 But with the most abundant kindness that
 Eye-ravisht lover can express, he sought
 To drive extremity of grief from her,
 And hasten on the time of marriage ; and
 Thereunto not less earnest cheerfully
 Than if she were not disinherited
 Of that most goodly portion liberally
 Bequeath'd by Nature ; for that cause deferr'd

His purpos'd vengeance on *Demagoras*,
 So he might keep continually with her :
 Shewing more humble serviceableness
 And joy to please her now than e'er before.

But even as he gave this example rare,
 Not to be hoped for again unless
 There might arise another *Argalus*,
 So did *Parthenia* take as strange a course :
 For, though she more desir'd his love than life,
 She overcame her own desire and his,
 And in no sort would yield to marry him.
 And strange that he, by an affection sprung
 Even from excessive beauty, should delight
 Thus in such horrible foulness ; and that she,
 Of vehement desire to have him, should
 Yet kindly thus a resolution build
 Never to have him : for the truth it is
 She lov'd him so she could not find in heart
 To tie him down to an unworthy thing.

He conjur'd her by memory of her love,
 And all true oaths of his affection true,
 She would not make him so unblest to think
 That with her face he had also lost her heart.
 He told her, at its fairest, that her face
 Had but a marshal been, to lodge her love
 Within his mind, which now was plac'd so well

It needed not an outward harbinger :
 Beseeching her, with very tears, to know
 That not so superficial was his love
 To go no deeper than the skin, which yet,
 Since it was hers, to him was very fair.
 How could he, thus ungrateful, love her less
 For that which for his sake she had endur'd ?
 He ne'er beheld it but he saw therein
 The loveliness of her great love toward him.
 Protesting unto her he would not take
 Joy of his life an 'twere not joy of her.

But she made answer, wringing of his hand ;
 " My lord, *God* knows I love you," did she say.
 " If I were princess of the whole wide world,
 And had all blessings e'er the hour brought forth,
 I would not make delay to lay myself
 And them beneath your feet ; or, if I had
 Remain'd but as I was, though, I confess,
 Unworthy far of you, I would with joy
 Too great for my heart now to look upon,
 Have taken your vouchsafing me to take,
 And all defects with faith and love supplied.
 But let me be more miserable than now,
 Much more, much more, ere I match *Argalus*
 To such *Parthenia*. No ; live happy, Dear ;
 I give you back in full your liberty,
 And I beseech of you to take the gift,

And I assure you that I shall rejoice
 Whatever I be, to see you coupled so
 As for your honour and your joy is best."

With that she burst out crying and weeping sore,
 Not able longer to contain herself,
 Blaming her fate and wishing she were dead.

But *Argalus*, with a most heavy heart,
 Pursuing his desire, she, fixt of mind
 To avoid entreaty, fly all company,
 Ay, even his, did steal away one night,
 But whither no man knew. He sought her long
 In many places, until wanhope came
 Upon his heart, and he grew weary of life.

But now, determining to be aveng'd
 Upon *Demagoras*, he went alone,
 Disguis'd, to the chief town the *Helots* held ;
 Where, coming into his presence, guarded round
 By many soldiers, he could not delay
 His fury longer for a fitter time,
 But setting on him there despite of those
 That helpt him, gave him many mortal wounds.
 And he himself had perisht presently
 But that *Demagoras* order'd he be kept
 Alive, perchance with the intent to feed
 His eyes with cruel persecution laid

On him ; but death came sooner than he thought ;
And his successor kept *Argalus* alive,
To wait for death till ending of the war.

Now strange events fell out which brought the war
To a quick issue, and *Argalus* was freed ;
Who caring little, *Parthenia* being lost,
Whether he liv'd or died, went on his way
And sojourn'd at the house of *Kalander*.
And there was merry-making in the house,
Where all men, saving *Argalus* alone,
Shew'd forth in joyful eyes their joyful hearts.

Then fortune who, belike, was bid to the feast,
And meant to play the Goodfellow thereat,
Among them did a pleasant adventure bring.

As they had newly din'd, a messenger
Came unto *Kalander*, who brought him word
A noble lady, kinswoman to the queen
Of *Corinth*, was come thither and desir'd
A lodging in his house ; and *Kalander*
Went out to meet her, all his worthiest guests
With him, save *Argalus*, who remain'd alone
Within his chamber, thinking of his love,
Wishing the company were broken up,
That he might make his solitary quest.

But, when they met the lady, *Kalander*
 Thought straightway it had surely been his niece,
 And would have spoken in familiar kind.
 But she, in grave and honourable sort,
 Gave him to understand that he mistook ;
 And *Kalander*, half asham'd, excus'd himself
 With the exceeding likeness that she bore
 Unto *Parthenia*, though indeed it seem'd
 That, of the two, this lady had the more
 Dainty and pure complexion ; and she said
 It very well might be, because they two
 Were taken, one for other, many times.

But, soon as she was brought into the house,
 Ere she would rest her, she desir'd to speak
 With *Argalus* in public, who, she heard,
 Was in the house, and he came forth in haste,
 And thought in haste as *Kalander* had thought,
 With sudden change of joy to grief : but she,
 When she had staid their thought by telling them
 Her name and quality, spake on this sort.

“ Lord *Argalus*,” she said, “late being left
 At *Helen's* court, the Queen of *Corinth*, chief
 During her absence, she being gone thence
 For some occasion, came there unto me
Parthenia, so disfigur'd that, I think,
Greece hath not anything more foul to shew.

Some vehement oaths it took, yea, and good proofs
 Ere she could make me think that it was she :
 Yet, finding certainly that she it was,
 And pitying her greatly, all the more
 That men had told me, even as you do now,
 Of that great likeness which between us is,
 I took the dearest care I could of her,
 And understood the woful history
 Of her adventure ; ay, and therewithal,
 Of that most noble constancy in you,
 Lord *Argalus*, which, whoso loveth not,
 He sheweth him a hater of all good,
 Ay, and unworthy with mankind to live.

But naught of outward cherishing could salve
 Her inward sore : a few days since she died.
 But, ere she died, *Parthenia* earnestly
 Desir'd me and persuaded that of none
 As husband I should think, saving of you,
 The one man that was worthy to be lov'd.
 Withal she bade me give this ring to you,
 Desiring, and, by love's authority,
 Commanding you to turn that love to me
 Which you had borne to her ; assuring you
 Nothing there is can please her spirit more
 Than to behold us twain together matcht.

And now, my lord, albeit this office I take
 Upon me be not suitable to me,

In sex or in estate, seeing my sex
 Should rather look to be desir'd, yet, sooth,
 Desert uncommon claims uncommon deed :
 And therefore I am come with faithful love
 Built on your worthiness, to offer you
 Myself, and to beseech you to accept
 The offer ; and, if these noble gentlemen
 Here present, say it is great folly, yet
 Let them withal say that it is great love."

With that she staid, attending earnestly
 The answer *Argalus* should make ; who, first
 Heaving most hearty sighs, the obsequies
 Of his *Parthenia*, answered thus to her.

" Madam, I am infinitely bound to you
 For not less rare than noble courtesy,
 And infinitely bound because of that
 Sweet kindness I perceive you shew'd to her ;"
 (With that the tears ran down his face, but yet
 He follow'd on, she listening grave,) " and just
 As much as so unfortunate a man,
 Fit to be spectacle of misery,
 Can do you service, here you may be sure
 That you have made a purchase of a slave
 Who, while I live, shall never fail you at need.
 But this great matter you propose to me,
 Wherein I am not so blind as not to see

What happiness 'twould be—O excellent
 Lady, if but my heart were mine to give,
 You should possess it before anyone ;
 But it is dead *Parthenia's* : there began
 All matter of affection and there ends.
 I hope not long to tarry after her
 With whose good beauty only had I been
 In love, I should be now with you who have
 The same ; but 'twas *Farthenia's* self I lov'd
 And love ; which never likeness can make one ;
 Which no commandment ever can dissolve ;
 Which never any foulness can defile ;
 Which never any death can bring to end."

"And must I bear disgrace to be refus'd ?"
 Said she. But he, "Nay, use not that hard word,
 Who know your own exceeding worthiness,
 Far above my desert : I but refuse
 Happiness, since the only happiness
 I could or can desire, I am refus'd."

But scarcely had he said these words than she
 Ran unto him and fell upon his neck ;
 "Why, then, take thy *Parthenia, Argalus !*"
 And there she stood, *Parthenia's* very self.

Then, seeing grief forbade him to believe,
 She told him all the truth with circumstance ;
 How, being gone away, meaning to die,

Moaning aloud in solitary place,
Helen, the Queen of *Corinth*, passing by,
Walking alone, heard her and never left
Till she had heard the whole of her discourse ;
And, pitying her greatly, *Helen* sent
A skill'd physician of her own, in hope
That he could help her ; which he well perform'd
In that same sort they saw. Then she, with her
Taking of the queen's servants, thought to make
This trial, whether *Argalus* would yet
Quickly forget his true *Parthenia* or no.

And *Helen's* servants well confirm'd her speech,
And *Argalus* believ'd what he desir'd
More than ten thousand years of mortal life ;
And so the wedding-feast was made for them.

TO ANNIE.

SPRINGTIME, Love ! how short a time it seems since the
snow and frost,
And the mist thick-falling over the hills and the daylight
early lost ;
The strong keen wind and the short-liv'd sun and the cosy
household blaze,
And you, bright-fac'd and sober-gown'd, all pleasant and
sweet to my gaze,
With your gracious wisdom calm beneath your pretty
childly ways.

Ay, it was just a month, a month, I lost the count of,
Dear ;
That's how the beautiful summer-time has suddenly come
so near ;
It seems as it were but yesterday the doctor stood close
by
With the face so grave it needed not to tell me that I
must die :

Yes, Love, I could say, "God's will be done!" but, to
see you standing there
With the agony stamp'd upon your face and your hands
close-claspt in pray'r!

Poor little wife! as he left the room you follow'd him and I
saw
When you came again that your eyes were dim, and a
kind of quiet awe
Was on your face as you drew quite close and kiss'd my
poor parcht mouth
With kisses that fell as sweet as rain on the heart of a
summer's drouth.

Are the tears springing again at the thought? from joy,
not sorrow, they come:
Yes, we are glad, Dear, you and I, that I stay for a while
in this home:
And, full of its happy thankfulness and laughter and love,
the heart,
Instead of learning a service strange, takes up its familiar
part.

I am very glad it is spring-time now, for I seem to under-
stand
New things as I breathe the happy breath of the new-
awaken'd land:

New things, nay, rather old things new in the light which
fair doth fall

Upon my heart from the presence-room of the Father
who giveth all.

I hear the bleat of the yeanling lamb and I smell the
new-turn'd earth,

The smell of the fields the Lord will bless in the harvest's
time of mirth.

The glow of life is on my cheek and the common air is
good,

And the hunger awakes to be satisfied with the taste of
common food.

Turn your chair round a wee bit, Dear : so—that is the
very place—

Put down your work and give me your hand and let me
look in your face.

I want to tell you how, all the time that death was stand-
ing near,

I could not think of the parting-hour as I watcht you
sitting here :

My thoughts turn'd back to the fair first time that ever I
saw you, Dear.

The night-lamp's light was burning low, and all so quiet,
except

For the feeble tick of the cover'd watch, that you thought
I surely slept :

But my spirit was with the long-ago crown'd by the face
that arose on me

Lustrous and pure in the silence fair that brooded o'er
shore and sea.

You had flung off your gypsy hat for heat, and the sunset's
golden red

Tremulous play'd with its sister-tint upon your bended
head :

And your eyes were bow'd to that page of his who was
king of your spirit then,

And your face mobile with the worded thoughts of Shake-
spere's women and men.

Your father call'd you to greet his friend who had come
to your home that night,

And you rose from your seat on the sand with a smile
that was, oh ! so frank and bright.

Welcome Home! and the soft little hand unjewell'd to
mine was given—

Welcome Home! and my home was there that beautiful
quiet even.

Home, home, home, sweet home ! at last, in the own
country,

The sparrow might build herself an house, the swallow at
rest might be.

All the night long your lovely face was the star of stars
that lit

My soul and banisht the heavy clouds that grief had
flung over it :

All the night long : and when light made glad the heart
of the rathe young hours,
I heard you singing a carol blithe as you tended your
birds and flowers.

And day after day I knew your home, and walkt, a friend,
by your side,
Till I surely knew that for your sweet sake I would
gladly even have died ;
Annie, our Annie, they call'd you, and I was wild for the
right divine
To hold you fast in my heart and say *My Annie, and*
only mine.

But the happy dream was broken up, for was it not mad
and wild,
For I was a man of your father's age and you were almost
a child ?
Over and over I said to myself, ah, fool, but what would
it be
To bind the sapling lithe and young to the many-ring'd,
wind-bow'd tree ?
And in my heart there arose a cry that, no matter at what
fierce stress,
The angel of love might trample down the dragon of
selfishness.

It were best, I thought, I should leave your home, though
it were so hard to seek
The life unlit by the rosy dawn that was bright on your
lips and cheek ;
And I could not bear to look in your face and think how
cold and dull
The world-mists would beat on my heart bereft of its
bright and beautiful.

No, little hand, you shall not shut my lips with your
tender touch ;
Just let a sick man have his way who loves to chatter
so much ;
Was it a tear that fell just then, a tear to be kiss'd away?—
Little coy darling of mine, look up, and suffer me say
my say.

You never should know, I said to myself, of the love
that yearn'd to entwine
Its branches of strength around your heart and bind it
fast to mine ;
So I came to bid you a last goodbye, and I kiss'd your
little hand,
But you drew it sharply away from my lips, and I dar'd
not understand
Why, for a moment, you bow'd your face, and then,
with a deepen'd glow,

And a half-reproach in your eyes' sweet depths, you askt
me why I must go.

I only said that so it must be, and quietly turn'd away ;
But there broke on my ear a voice, your voice, that bore
me the one word *Stay*.

I turn'd me, Annie, and lookt in your face that was bright
with the quick young blood,

And the eyes bedimm'd with the tears that sprang from
your tender womanhood ;

And I saw that you knew my secret then, yet fear'd
that you might have given

Pity for Love, and I would not take aught less than
Heaven for my Heaven.

"Good-bye, sweet Annie, good-bye, I will not dwell on
what might have been—

It cannot be, that is all, my child : Good-bye, little
household queen ;

The locks that were wont to be bronze sometime are
turning to silver now—"

And your eyes, for a moment's space, dear heart, were
lifted to scan my brow—

And few were the low-ton'd words that brought such joy-
wealth—"It may be

The bronze of youth is ruddy and fair—this silver is
most to me."

O my true wife, the gem that hour is set in remembrance-
gold ;
It flooded my heart with a perfect joy whose glory can
never be told :
And day by day there grew on your face the look of
great content
Which told me your happiness indeed with me and
mine was blent :
Ay, I was glad for that good gift the Father of lights had
sent.

We have been very happy, Dear, through all these wedded
years ;
In pleasant places our lot was cast, that, not with the
terror of tears,
But the mist of compassion and tender thought from
barrenness were kept,
While golden hours span swiftly round and the spirit of
sorrow slept.
And oh ! for a keener eye to see and a keener ear to
hear,
And swifter feet and tenderer hands and love more large
and clear :
And oh ! to be kept in the perfect peace earth gives not
nor can destroy,
Until we twain at the last shall come to our God's eternal
joy.

CALLIMACHUS : A SKETCH.

Lo, when my master lay a-dying, I
 Alone, he chose, should wait to see him die.
 Soft, fine, and bright, even as web at morn,
 Hung round his brow his locks : that brow had borne
 Much weight of thinking, and the close, grave mouth
 Had never curv'd it to the smile that groweth
 Of mere light-heartedness. He lay with eyes
 Undimm'd of age turn'd full to the sunrise ;
 And thus he spake in slow tones thrillingly,
 Scarce to himself, and scarce, methinks, to me.

"The earth is older now by fifty years
 With all their joy and sorrow and smiles and tears,
 Since I, a young man, saw my future rise
 From the sun's bed, upon my eager eyes,
 With slow, symmetric movements gliding on :
 And in her curved palms I saw anon,
 Or seem'd to see, life, work, and crown in one.
 Yet was her face hid wholly from my sight,
 Veil'd with a veil of chrysochromal light.

Thus to my heart my heart—' The grace to thee
Upon those mute lips' veil'd sublimity,
Is the shaper's hand with the seer's eye to see.'

Yea, with these eyes of mine I saw it pass,
The pageant of life's mystery that was.
Groups of old warriors rose from their death-mist ;
Lips smil'd that funeral-fires long since had kiss'd ;
Brows that were calm'd of dreamless sleep, again
Took their old fierceness, resting limbs their strain.
Deeper the wonder grew, diviner still,
Glow'd the Immortals' track on slope and hill.
There, where the sky stooped down the earth to meet,
It was the rapture of Phœbus' parting feet
Mellow'd the blue and scarlet colours slow
Into the quivering amethystine glow.
It was the breath of loving Dryades
Stirr'd all the leafage of the happy trees.

Lo, in that glory of my days I saw
A maiden standing, with a shadowy awe
Upon her face that mockt her brows' bright wreath
As with the heavy dusk of coming death ;
While stern-fac'd men stood waiting till the knife
Should drink with cold blue lips her crimson life.
Then, with the heat upon me, I essay'd
To paint the picture.—

When aside I laid

My brush, I knew full well that none would see
In that false picture what was seen of me.
And, though the many did, with partial eyes,
Praise it as beautiful and true, more wise
To mine own condemnation, lifted I
My hands against that work that was a lie.
Those eyes of Zeus had burn'd into my brain,
And better light than joy, though light be pain ;
Yea, Beauty, to my deeming, is in sooth
Bastard that springs not from the womb of Truth.

Years did I toil in patience : grew a face
Upon my canvas, wherein I sought to trace
His woe, by the strong victors' pitiless might
Crusht into silence, smitten into night.
The dead wreath fallen from his loosen'd hair,
The hands dropt listless in his dumb despair.
Look, O mine eyes and gaze, and see in this
The very self-same stricken Thamyris !—
A little doubt that rose flood-high, and swept
My hope away !

I bow'd my face and wept,
As he might weep whom Time not yet may rob
Of the child-right to lift his voice and sob.

Again, more old, more sad, I paus'd to see
A work that was conceiv'd and born of me.
The mortal maid the Immortal God must slay
With splendour, waiting for the hour o' the day

The God who stooped to love her should arise
In all his unveil'd glory on her eyes.
O soul in the eager eyes and quivering lips !
O transport of the near Apocalypse !

'Is this the picture that thy soul did see ?
Nay.—Let it perish unbelov'd of thee !'

Well, I was stronger now ; perhaps because
The great white Truth had kiss'd my brows, it was :
And, though there throb'd through every nerve and sense
The agony of conscious impotence,
I, loving Truth beyond all hope, all fame,
Gave all my pictures to the heart o' the flame,
And—waited. A little while ago there came
A light I knew to be the morning star ;
I felt its thrills of tremulous sweetness afar,
And rose with happy tears upon my cheek—
Then first I knew that I was old and weak—
And follow'd, faltering, toward the blessed light,
While one walkt with me, stately, tall, and bright,
Who smote upon a lyre, and keen and strong
Uprose the subtle sweetness of his song.
I think I must have swoon'd in my delight,
For, when I knew to speak and see, the white
Folds of his undefiled robe were gone,
And I was lying on the ground alone,
Fever and strife and weariness all ceast
In that fixt solemn gaze upon the East.

And I am well content ; the mystery
Is open now, or my brain clear'd to see
How from my seeming failure's bitterness
I shall, in unborn ages, reap success :
Not in myself, a man of men, indeed,
But in THE MAN, one day to take his meed
As victor from the breast of Time, superb
In virile strength that needs nor spur nor curb.

O life ! O art ! I know that I am pure
From treason, having chosen to endure
Rather the most exceeding pain than show
Shadow for light ; I joy that it was so.

Hush ! the ascending sun ! mine eyeballs beat
To catch his ray : a thousand times more sweet
To perish blind for gazing thus, I know,
Than look unharm'd upon the dusk below.
—Cover my face."

And it was so : and thus
He past away who was Callimachus.

IN A NUTSHELL.

IN the *Arcadia*, Sidney's fair romance,
There is a fragment of a fairy tale,
Which clings about my heart and will not go.

'Twas Mopsa told it : rough and coarse was she,
Stamp'd vulgar to the core with the brand self
Unlovely and unlov'd ; and, as she told,
The hearers were unfain to hear, and yet
She moon'd along, until one stay'd her tongue
With gentle prayer that she would keep her tale
For better audience and a better day.

She lik'd the tale, or lik'd to tell the tale,
And laid it in the silence, with the hope
To tell it one day at a festival.
Poor Mopsa ! Here beginneth Mopsa's tale,
Told, nearly as may be, in Mopsa's words.

"In the time past," she said, "there was a king,
The mightiest man in all his countryside,

Whose wife bare unto him a child that was
The fairest daughter ever tasted pap.
And the king kept a great and generous house
Where all might come and freely take their meat.
So one day, as the king's fair daughter sat
Within her window, playing on a harp—
As sweet as any rose was she : her hair
Held by a rich comb, set with precious stones—
There came a knight riding into the court
Upon a goodly horse, one hair of gold,
The other silver ; and 'twas so that he,
Casting his eyes up to that window of hers,
Fell into such extremity of love,
That he did grow not worth the bread he ate :
Till, many a sorry day going o'er his head,
With daily diligence and grievly groans,
He won her heart and won her word to leave
Her father's court and go along with him.

And so in May when all true hearts rejoice,
They stole away together, staying not
To break their fast, but satisfied with love.
And now as they together went, and oft
Did fall to kissing one another's face,
He told his lady how the water-nymphs
Had brought him up, and had bewicht him so,
If any one should ask him of his name,
He presently must vanish quite away.

And therefore charg'd her, on his blessing, ne'er
To ask him what he was or whither he would.

So a great while she did his bidding keep,
Till, passing through a cruel wilderness,
As dark as pitch, her heart so burn'd in her,
She could not choose but ask the question.

Then he, making the grievousest complaints,
That would have melted hardest wood to hear,
There in the darkness vanisht quite away.
And she lay down casting forth pitiful cries.

But having lain so five days and five nights,
Wet by the rain, burnt by the sun, she rose
And went o'er many high hills and rivers deep
Until she came to an aunt's house of hers,
And stood and cried aloud to her for help.
And she, for pity, gave a nut to her,
And bade her never open it, till she
Were come to the extremest misery
That ever tongue could speak of : and she went
And went, and never rested her at even
Where in the morn she went, until she came
Unto a second aunt, who gave to her
Another nut."—Here Mopsa's tale breaks off.

I read this o'er, and ponder'd, till I saw
Unto an end, albeit not Mopsa's end ;

Only an end that met the soul of one
Small singer of the nineteenth century,
Who felt her heart burn in her at the words,
“And bade her never open it till she
Were come to the extremest misery.”

I think she must have found another aunt
And gain'd another nut.—Though fairy tales
Delight to deal in sevens and in threes,
I let the third gift go and keep the two.

This was the word went with the second nut,
“Break this when thou dost know there is no need
To break the other.” And she faintly smil'd,—
“I think that will be in the day of joy,
The day of joy that I shall never see.”

Suppose a woman with a gift like this,
Not to be us'd till she herself was come
Unto the very extremest misery
That ever tongue could speak of—how of it?—
May it be thus?—

The princess must go on
Smitten of sorrow, driven of remorse,
Seeking and never finding, till her limbs
Refus'd to bear her up, and so she cast
Her length upon a rocky beach, 'neath cliffs
White, sharp, and strong and stern, around whose base

Beat that eternal trouble of the sea.
"And now," she said, "the time is surely come,
The very extremest time of misery,
For what I seek is gone, and power to seek
Is gone." But lo, a voice that whisper'd, "Nay,
For will to seek is thine ; till that be gone
Thou art not come to thy extremest woe."

And so she rose and still pursued her way,
Bedrencht with rain, or faint for extreme heat,
Footsore and tir'd ; and yet there never came
A moment in the which to pause and say,
"Now am I come to woe's extremity."

And on her way she sang this song of hers.

"I may not find thee, O my love of loves ;
My sin it was that drave thee from my side,
My suffering would I give to bring thee back.
Unfaith of mine hath struck thee like a flash
Of lightning, and I cannot see thy face.
My loss I know, but thine, who hast lost the light
Of earth and all the sweets of human joy
And grandeur of human suffering, know I not ;
I love thee and seek, though finding never come."

So cried she weeping, in a stranger land,
And the men said, "Behold, the maid is mad !"
And took her up in their ungentle arms

And bare her to a dungeon underground,
And left her there ; so she was all alone
With flitter-mice and heavy dark and damp,
And silence ; and on her bosom lay her nut,
And yet she brake it not.

But lo ! a cry
Smote through the horrible darkness on her ear ;
And, sharp upon her brain, no need of sense,
There came the knowledge that he lay close by,
Prison'd and tortur'd : then she lifted up
Her voice, that bare exceeding love and ruth
In a strong cry upon her lover's name.
But it sank quivering on the darkness' heart,
And could not reach him, for the walls were thick.
Then moan'd she in her grief, "The time is come,
My most extremest time of misery,
For I am fain to help and cannot help ;
No darker time can come."

But the same voice
That stay'd her heretofore, rose up, and said,
"Thou hast the will to help, if not the power ;
Therefore thou art not in extremest woe."

And then the princess askt, "Is there yet more ?"
And this the answer, "Not for thee, O child,
The extremest misery tongue can utter forth,
Or shuddering silence hold upon her breast ;
Seeing that all the suffering laid on thee

Hath quicken'd thee, not kill'd thee : sharp regrets
For sin have prickt thee on, not stung to death :
Great waters going over thee washt clean,
Not drown'd thee : therefore rise and break the nut
Whose breaking was to be when thou wert sure
Thy woe should never be extremest woe."

And so she brake the nut—and then—there came
That which I know not how to tell—great joy
And peace and strength—and came for both of them,
The seeker and the sought.

I dedicate
This little tale to You, for You will know :
And, if some throw the thing aside, because
I have mixt the thought of separate centuries
And thence brought forth some strange inconsequence,
I shall be satisfied, if You approve.
If any shrug the shoulder, saying, " Well,
But Mopsa never would have ended thus."
You know I never said or thought she would.

GOOD-BYE.

THERE is no one but you with me now? it is well, for I
wanted to say

A word in your ear alone, before I am taken away.

Stoop to me, love, till I touch your brow with my lips
again—

I wish they could smooth away the furrows of care and
pain.

Don't fret—there is comfort to come, and it must be best,
I know,

Because it was God's sweet will that I should arise and
go ;

But if He had left me a while, had left me to be your
wife,

I should have made you forget the sorrow that gloom'd
your life.

I know it, my dear, my dear ; the wisest and best of you
all

Have been snar'd from the heights of their strength and
faith into sudden fall ;

Snar'd from their loyalty's glory to peril their lofty place,
For a shrine that has never a god, their souls for a beautiful face.

What is it, darling of mine? You say you were vain and untrue?

Belov'd, in the darkest hour of that darkest night, I knew
When the glamour past from your eyes, you would be
your own self once more—

And I, you know it full well, I lov'd you the same as before.

The same, though I gave you back, unshrinking, your plighted troth,

And told you, with tearless eyes, that I thought so best for us both ;

But when you left me I knelt, and with crying and tears I crav'd,

Not, dear, that you might be mine, but that *somehow* you might be sav'd.

Sav'd, undegraded, unstain'd, from the breast of the ruin that mocks

With the semblance of holiest things, while it shears off the strong one's locks ;

Sav'd to the grace and the glory that only the pure can know,

The life that is warm as the sun, the life that is white as the snow.

When you came from the wanderings home, I should
scarcely have known you again,
For your face was chang'd so much with traces of struggle
and pain,
And your eyes were so deep and sad, and even over your
brow
My yellow harvest was dasht with a sprinkling of early
snow.

But O, my belov'd, my belov'd, that look in your face
you had
The look for a woman who lov'd and had waited, to see
and be glad ;
I knew you would come to the Father, come home from
the stranger's country—
I knew not how strong through the struggle my darling
would come back to me.

You are weeping silently here ! There are tears on the
hand you hold !
“ Poor little hand,” you say, “ undeckt of the marriage
gold.”
Ah, but my dear, we shall know, when the time of the
purpose is ripe,
Love in the glory unveil'd that needeth nor symbol nor
type.

Stay from your weeping a while ; so—raise my head on
your breast ;
Is the light passing away ? No matter, this light is the best.

Think, love, when you're closing my eyes, and crossing my
hands to-night,

"It never was grief that slew her, but overweight of
delight."

For the harp that was lone so long, when it felt your
hand once more

Lie light and strong on its strings, as in happy days of
yore,

In its agony of bliss, gave forth such music in token

To the dear, dear hand that swept, that its golden strings
were broken.

I wanted to make you happy—but God will do so still ;

Has not His tenderness made it easy to trust His will ?

It will be morning soon—morning for me and for you—

God be with you, my darling ; He will be with me too.

BLUE AND WHITE.

"Of all the colours that are, say what may your favourite be?"

And the lad I had nurst back to life lookt up and made answer to me,

"Two colours I choose, blue and white." Then up from my throat did there spread

Yea, up to my very temples, a dye of happy rose-red :

For a maiden's face will flush for the lightest thing evermore,

And blue was the ribbon that bound my hair, and white was the gown I wore.

"May I tell you all, lady sweet?" "Ay, sir, an it please you so."

Together and all alone we sat in the firelight's glow ;

Myself and the lad our men had found nigh dead close by :—

The mother that bare him could never, I think, have nurst him more gently than I.

"Fair sister—nay, pardon the freedom—but oh ! you
have been so good,
I well could wish that I ow'd you the duty of brother-
hood ;
Now crown your sweet favours with this, the greatest of
all, and be
As tender to that true-love of mine as you have been
tender to me."

The light seem'd blurr'd away, and all was strange and
dim
For a little space, as there I sat and listen'd to him :
A little space, but then, by the helping of God's dear
grace,
I spoke and answer'd, "Yea, brother, I will," with a very
smile on my face.

"God bless you !" he said from his heart : "now listen ;
a year ago
She gave herself to me for ever and ever ; and so,
One still, sweet Autumn eve, in the time of the falling of
dew,
I gemm'd that little white hand of hers with a circlet of
sapphires blue.

For she, my own lady and love, takes ever the most
delight
In the delicate virginal calm of the colours I nam'd, blue
and white ;

And it seem'd I was sooth'd all o'er with a sense of fair
repose,

O dear new sister, seeing you wear the colours my darling
chose."

O bonny blue ribbon, you prest on my brain too tight,
too tight !

O heart, how wildly you beat beneath your virginal
white !—

Dear friend, in whose happy home the love-fire burneth
free,

I am glad God's hand has given to you the joy it has
kept from me.

DAVIE CARR.

ARE you asleep, little Davie? I've slipt away from the
gloom ;

It was, oh, so dreary to play in the lonely, darken'd
room :

The blinds are all pull'd down and our books put by on
the shelf :

But I don't care for holidays now when there's no one to
play but myself.

You are fast asleep, little coz: I won't disturb you, but
croon

So softly it will not awake you ; you'll think it's a bit of
a tune

You are listening to in your dreams as you lie so pale
and still ;—

Won't your pretty red roses come back? I wonder
whether they will.

You've lain so long, so long, in that wearisome bed, coz
dear,

They will hardly come back before the red June roses are
here :

The angels that love the flowers will come to our gardens
then,
And maybe they'll kiss your cheeks and make 'em rosy
again.

I think there's a secret for us to hear in a day or so,
For I heard old Nursey whisper to Auntie, "when may
she know?"

I know it was me they meant, but Auntie just turn'd to the
wall—

But when you get up they'll find we are sharp enough
for 'em all.

I'm tir'd of holidays, Davie ; I'd like to do lessons again ;
But Auntie looked just as she looks, you know, when her
head is in pain,

When I offer'd to bring her my books, and said, "Little
Alice, nay,

You needn't mind lessons just now ; you may go to your
dolls and play."

So when she went out of the room with that sorrowful
look in her face,

(I hadn't been naughty *indeed*,) I stole away from the
place,

And left Miss Doll on the floor in her grand new frock
that I've made ;—

I'll shew it you when you get up—that won't be just yet,
I'm afraid.

I've minded your toys for you, Davie ; your little pet
bird I have fed ;
And you couldn't have taken more care of your garden
yourself, Robin said ;
There are funny green letters sprung up ; you never would
guess what they are—
It's a secret—but then you're asleep—*D.C.* for your
name, *Davie Carr*.

They've cut off your nice little curls : 'twas a pity, but
then, you know,
You'll be just as happy without 'em ; they'll never get
tangled so :
Your hands were as brown as mine, and now they are
just as white
As Aunty's—and how did you keep the bed clothes so
tidy all night ?

You're sleeping a long, long while : good-bye, little coz :
oh dear,
I'm afraid, if I stay any longer, they'll come in and find
me here.
If I kiss'd you perhaps I should wake you : good-bye,
make haste to get well—
I am very lonely without you, more lonely than I can
tell.

AN OLD MAID.

SITTING with folded hands, that have dropt the needle
and thread,
Looking athwart the fields, where the evening light is
shed
On the waving grass, and whence arises the lowing of
herds,
While the happy leafage thrills because of the time of the
singing of birds.

Sixty rings, I think, have circled her life-tree's girth,
Sixty years of the world, with its mingled pathos and
mirth.
How has she taken the time since her baby-steps were set
Among the anemones' bloom, and the sweets of the
violet?

What has she been, who sitteth with delicate lights drop-
ping down
On the bow'd head's silver locks, and the folds of the
silken gown?

Has she not walkt on the way that she chose at the gates
of youth,
Bright in the graces of holiness, grand in the splendours
of truth?

Bearing the hopes of the sowing, the gladness of those
who reap ;
Smiling with those who are smiling, weeping with those
who weep ;
Graciously grave, serenely bright, with a wisdom large
and mild,
A man's clear judgment, a woman's love, and the faith of
a little child.

Her heart is the little ones' nest, grown tired of the ball
and the race,
They come to be rested because of the love in her beau-
tiful face ;
One silent clasp of her hand most deeply has comforted
Women and men too, whose eyes have wept for the false
or the dead.

And many a heart that bleeds for its sin, and yet could
not bare
The throb of its shuddering nerves to a cold, analytical
stare,

Lying lone on the wayside of life, she, tenderly bending
above,
Doth soothe with the unguent of mercy, and cheer with
the strong wine of love.

Was there ever a pitiful cry in the depths of her gracious
soul
For the wifehood's joy denied, and the motherhood's
aureole?
Can her thought go back to a time when her patient
footsteps trod
Among the grieving thorns, alone with sorrow and God?

However it be, on her face is the look of sweet content
That comes when the music of life of love and duty is
blent ;
And peace is hers that is more than the joy of morning
prime,
And light that is greater than day, has come at her
evening time.

PADDY.

" WILLIAM O'GRADY, bachelor, and Mary Lee, spinsther."

So

His Riverence call'd us in the church, it's just five year ago.

Three times the banns was put up for us, but,* the day that follow'd the third,

I meets my Mary an' says 'Let us each give back the other their word.'

She knew why I spoke out then to her ; it was growin' for manny a day

Afore at last it lep' into speech, as we stood amoong the hay,

Down in the half-mown meddas : the sun was gone to rest, An' the corncrake was crakin' an' croakin',—I knew where she had her nest.

It wasn't a sharp, quick quarrel iv ours, to blaze up sthrong an' die out ;

It wasn't doubtin' each other we was, we niver had had a doubt ;

* The *u* all through as in *put*.

But a thing that had smowldher'd an' smowldher'd until
I'd made up my mind at last,
The loove* I'd been buildin' my future on must just be
a thing o' the past.

"Mary," says I, "there's a word, a name, that coomes
between us two,

A name that slips like a bit iv a sting from that purty
mouth iv you ;

Ah, my child ! I know it well, so where's the good iv a fuss ?
Say good-bye, an' let it all be as it never had been for us.
Ye never would call me *Paddy* as ye do, if ye didn't
despise

Somethin' about me or in me ; an' it doesn't seem right
in my eyes

A girl should look down in anny way on the man she's
goin' to wed—

That's enough ; ye know how the' say, soonest mendud
where laste is said.

Ye're betther nor me a hoondherd times, but only betther
becos

Ye're a woman—the sweetest woman on earth, the dearest
that ever was—

An' not becos iv yer English blood, for, were ye a man,
it's thue,

I'd look ye sthraight in the face an' say, 'I'm as good,
every bit, as you.'

* As in *look*.

What right had ye, Mary, I axe, to have that look in your
face, an' spake

O' my counthry in words ye shouldn't ha' us'd, not for
my sake, büt right' sake ;

Ring out yer scornful *Paddy* ! as if my Irish blood was a
taint

The Lord 'ud have to burn out o' me afore he could
make me a saint?

Counthry ! what good's in a counthry ? Why this, I take
it, indeed—

God made us all wan flesh an' blood—that's thrue, but
God decreed

Father an' mother, an' family o' brothers an' sisthers then,
An' next the clan, and next, I think, the counthry was
made for men.

An' I loove my father an' moother well, an' broothers an'
sisthers too,

An' loove my people, an' loove my land, like a loyal man
and thrue.

Maybe it's proud ye're thinkin' me ? I think there's
some things, dear,

God manes us all to be proud about, an' I think I've wan
iv 'um here.

I don't deserve to be despis'd ; I'd be wrongin' God if
I said

That becos he made me an Irishman, I ought to hang
down my head.

England says, 'Where's Ireland's wrongs? They're all
in the long ago;
We're thratin' Ireland handsome enough.' An' all the
while, ye know,
Englishmen wid a laff an' a sneer, or a pat on the back
that's worse,
Talks o' the Paddies they've got to manage, an' turns
their good to a curse.
Ireland's wrongs! Well, Mary—no, I am not goin' to
jaw;
I'm sore all over, too sore to scold. It's a long while
since I saw
Ye lookt down on me becos o' my blood; I thought I
could make it right,
But I couldn't—it wasn't anny use; so I say good-bye
to-night.
It was only yester-eve, my dear, ye thrated me just like
this,
An' I lay awake all night, an' I made up my mind that
better it is,
Ay, maid an' bachelor's better we part, nor go through
a maybe long life,
A wife that despises her husband, a husband despis'd by
his wife!
I've spoke about it manny a time; ye know I have, my
dear;
I wouldn't take y' up short like this, I wouldn't coome to
ye here,

Afther the banns was call'd an' all, if I hadn't ha' spoke afore :

I know its dhreadful breakin' the plight, but it's dhreadful, ten times more

To go through wedlife wid broken peace. They'll know it's all my fau't ;

They'll never wrong ye, Mary dear, wid the shadda iv a thought.

Forgive me touchin' at such a thing, but I know what things the' say—

They'll never dare to say 'um o' you, that's all ; ye can thrust me ? Eh ? ”

Then I turn'd away an' left her there, who never had said a word,

An' I listen'd, but grasshopper's chirrup and cry o' corn-crake only I heard.

I gother'd up my horruble grief an' sthrode away from the place,

An' left the girl, who had been my girl, wid a hush an' fear in her face.

An' I wisht I might be a woman for wonst, ay, so from my heart did I ;

For a woman might ease her heart wid tears, but a man have no call to cry.

Crake ! crake ! crake ! she called, that bird, an' the grasshopper chirrupt so sthrong,

An' the jew was fallin' heavy an' thick, as, alone, I walkt along ;

The air was dhrencht wid the sweets o' the flowers, for, all
the way as I went,

The roses, an' woodbine, an' manny more, was givin' out
such a scent.

An' afther a while I stopt my walk, an' down, wid weary
limb

An' wearier heart, I sat on a stone, an' life lookt sthrange
an' grim :

The flower breath seem'd to choke me a'most, an' even
the feel o' the jew

Was like a fever an' not a cool, an' the moon came out
an' grew,

Sailin' along in the big blue sky, she grew to an awful
size ;

An' all the stars seem'd starin' down on me wid their
pitiless eyes :

Eyes o' fire, an' eyes o' fire, an' eyes o' fire they were,
Till I hid my face—an' when I lookt up, *her* eyes was
shinin' there.

She puts her two arms round my neck, and says, " My
love, forgive."

An' I looks sthraight into her face to see if my hope, just
born, might live ;

" Then, are we *equals* in God's sight ? " " No, love," says
she, " becos

Ye're betther nor me, for ye wouldn't give up yer man-
hood for me that was

Silly an' stupud enough——" but here I stopt her words
wid a kiss—

"Are we equals now in blood an' birth?" an' Mary answer'd "*Yes.*"

An' I rose to my feet, an' she flung herself on my breast in sobs an' tears:—

I wouldn't ha' made her cry like that for the joy iv a thousand years:

But thin for the *right* it's a different thing.—She cried that night, I say;

But niver a tear since thin for me, an' we're marrud five year to-day.

THAT BOY.

THANK you, Willie, my child, this is very cosy and
sweet ;

Son and daughter in one, sit down here at my feet.

What a great fellow you're growing ! and ever, still as
you grow,

You are liker another Willie, my darling of long ago.

I like to talk to you of him, I know that you under-
stand ;—

Yes, dear, draw closer to me,—so—closer—and hold my
hand ;

That other Willie of mine, who past from my sight for a
space,

With the dew of youth on his locks, and the light of God
on his face.

Strong, and joyous, and true ; 'twould not have been easy
to find

One more thoroughly healthy, alike in body and
mind ;

With his clever strong brown hands, and the laugh from
his heart that rang,
And the noble thoughts half hid, half told in his school-
boy slang.

Sometimes he'd dream for an hour, then call out for
something to do ;
He had feet that were ready for service, and innocent
mischief, too ;
Was careless of clothing and cash ; I remember his
mother would say
That money burnt holes in his pockets before he had
had it a day.

He had fancies graceful and strange. You know those
odd, grotesque
Faces he cut with his pen-knife upon his deal-wood
desk :
And you know those sketches of his, where under the
crudeness lay
A life and a fire that must have wrought good work some
day.

I loved to watch him at church, as he sat in the corner-
place,
A light from within or without, you knew not which, on
his face,

As his soul went up to God in the singing and praying
that rose :

And his face was a poem that taught me more than the
sermon's prose.

And oh ! those holiday times when the vague delicious
blue

That grew into greenwood anear, our jubilant footsteps
drew

Through light that never was glare, and shade that never
was gloom,

To the tufts of primroses fair, and the wild blue hya-
cinths' bloom.

Yes, dear, it was he who taught my soul in the long ago

The great invisible love by the visible love to know :

It was first in that bright young life that ever I under-
stood

To make people happy, Willie, is surely to make them
good.

He made people happy, Willie, just in his earnest or
play,

He couldn't help it, that's all ; and, oh ! when he went
away,

There was many and many a heart that mourn'd for the
lad, whose life

Had deepen'd its every-day joy and strengthen'd for
every-day strife.

They say that all pure souls grow to their stature's stately
height
Of manhood in Godhead baptiz'd, in the land of love
and light ;
But I think of *him* just as I knew him, and oh ! it is
such a joy
To know that the heart of Christ once beat as the heart
of a boy.

A ROSE.

THE sweetest rose it was, the loveliest

He could in all his garden find :

He brought it, saying, "Darling, leave your quest
Of knowledge for a little while, and rest
In sweet belief that Nature teaches best."

Well did he speak for, blind
To deep delight that Nature gives, I was
Unquiet-soul'd a seeker for the cause
Of many a thing and, with cold eyes,
I sought to read close-folden mysteries,
Forgetting Love, not Knowledge, maketh wise.

I took his rose and laid it to my mouth.
For one sweet hour I was a girl again,
Forgot my theories form'd at cost and pain,
And all I had gone through for knowledge' sake.
The soul of Eden fragrancy divine
Enter'd this soul of mine
And quencht its desperate drouth.
It was because I took when Love said "*Take.*"

My very brow grew smooth
For drops of spray tost from the Fount of Youth.

But, woe is me !
I could not let this light and beauty be !
I pull'd the petals of my rose apart,
With fingers most unkindly tore aside
The crimson veil that veil'd its golden heart.
I saw the gold, but ah ! the flower died.
And, all unwomanly, in pride,
"Away with ignorance !" I cried,
"My flow'rs shall all be knowledge-bringers !
To what availeth joy unless one knows
Its why and wherefore ?"

But my lover sigh'd,
"Ah, lady, you have kill'd my rose !"
And his true eyes with unshed tears grew dim,
Because the voice that had been unto him
Sweetest among the voices of the singers,
On God's good world flung discord's bitter wrong
Instead of sweetest song.

And never now a word of love he speaks,
But talks of systems and of rules and laws,
And of effect and cause,
As learned men talk unto learned men—
And my heart inly breaks,
For oh ! to be a woman once again !

So, cruel hand which could such joyaunce slay,
Lay down your pen for aye,
For you will never write those deep-ton'd songs
Of Love and Truth, to live on human tongues,
That human hearts may beat more quick and pure.

But how shall I endure
When One, with sadder eyes than his I griev'd,
Shall look on me whose garden is dead-leav'd?

O ghost of that sweet rose I kill'd,
Wilt thou for ever haunt me night and day?
Must all my life for aye

With breath of thy dead leaves be fill'd,
And golden dust defil'd cling to the feet
That on thy quivering heart unpitying trod,
And evermore that still, sad voice repeat
That whoso wrongeth Nature wrongeth God?

A DEAD WORKER.

Cross her hands upon her breast :
 Hands she never rais'd for pray'r
 In her toil ; but, in her rest,
 Let them lie, cross-folden fair
 As they had won prayer's reward :
 Poor dead hands all seam'd and hard.

What was she who lieth there,
 Little past her early youth ;
 Eyes coin-shut that else would stare,
 Bandage closing up the mouth ;
 No one having car'd to dress
 Death away from ghastliness ?

Young ? Nay, she was dull and old,
 Thinking but of market-price,
 Just its copper, not its gold ;
 With no glory in her eyes.
 At the rising of the sun
 Wishing weary day-time done.

Just a mere bald life was hers,
Missing our deep questioning,
What the outer universe
To the inner world may bring?
Stagnant soul that, all without
Faith or hope, could know no doubt.

Missing Love, and so, with it,
Missing all of Love that grew :
Missing too the exquisite
Morn-flusht skies and early dew.
Ah, of Love and Beauty reft,
What worth having is there left?

Silence kept without the pain
Speech denied brings bitterly :
Silence kept without the gain
Of a larger speech thereby :
Silence always :—was there naught
She could tell us of her thought?

Did God hold her just as dear
(Hard, if so, to realize)
As our saint whose soul shone clear
Through her pure, pathetic eyes ;
Whom we gaz'd on dead as though
Love itself lay still and low?

In the framing of our chart,
For the unexplored land
We must leave an unfill'd part
Till, some day, we understand
All the good things life may yield
In the country new-reveal'd.

But we fancy streams and trees,
Rock and moss and vale and hill ;
Till the new land clad in these
Seems not unfamiliar still.
There must be, whenc'er we come,
Something in it like our home.

Oh, the home we love must be
That strong Heart which loveth best :
In that other country He
Still is Home, so let it rest.
Cross her hands and leave her so,
Only He who loves can know.

Ah, and if she miss'd indeed
Blessings which the life receives
In the sowing of the seed,
In the binding of the sheaves,
Greater lessons God can teach
In some other kind of speech.

When her life shall take the grace
Of His life that naught can dim,
And the light is on her face,
Caught from looking up at Him,
Shall we meet as equals then?
Sister, child of His, Amen.

MADONNA DELLA VITA.

WHOSO will let him cast off the robe of his faith
 And the crown of his hope and the sceptre of love,
 And lie at the feet of the Lady of Death,
 Enwrap in the slumber no trouble of breath,
 No tempest of joy or of sorrow can move.
 Not thine be such rest, O my brother, my knight,
 Who ownest the mighty ones' sinews and thews :
 Not theirs and not thine to despair and refuse
 The forefront of battle, the thickest of fight.

I charge thee by all thou esteemest of worth
 Around thee and in thee, below and above,
 By the hintings of heav'n from the lips of the earth
 As she smiles in the clasp of the infinite love ;
 By that infinite love which around us lies light
 As the ether, or grips like a stark fate austere ;
 By the light and the darkness, the veil'd and the clear ;
 By the mystical glories of red and of white ;
 By the little we guess and the much we shall know
 Of the meaning of things that bewilder us here
 With fairness and foulness and gladness and woe :

I charge thee to stand, though bedew'd with the sweat
That is blood, armour hackt, and upon thee the stains
Of travail and conflict, and over thee pain's
Broad banner of dim, heavy purple, and wet
With the floods thou hast past through to come to this
place :

For the foe is alive yet, and nothing of grace
Must he have at thy hands till thou smite him to death ;
Thy foe who has vow'd to fordo her whose breath
In the world's nostrils breath'd made it quicken, and lo !
No longer red clay, but a glory and glow,
And a flame, which is God, whosoever gainsaith.

She stood in her splendour of beauty and grace
By Sokrates' side, and she breath'd on his soul
Till it would not be foil'd by the strange satyr-face,
The mask of the clay that was fain to control.
She smil'd on Gautama and kindled desire
For the fairer than fair, and her love was the fire,
The radiant, the lustral, that toucht him and caught
The heart of the prince till it flam'd up one red
In that light and its passion, and self lay all dead
To rise never more, for the man was of those
To whom hunger or fulness, or toil or repose,
Or glory or shame, seeing God, matters not.

Her hand held the Christ's from the womb to the grave,
Through the flow'rland of childhood that smil'd as he
stept,

On, on, through the wilds where the heather scarce kept
One touch of God's purple, hoar hill, and lone cave ;

On, on to the heights that in sheer steepness frown'd,
Jagged cliffs, black for awe of the elements' strife,

She led him unswerving, until he had found
The terrible cruciform portal of life.

Thou didst pledge her, unknowing, when speechless thou
lay'st,

In the milk of thy mother ; and, later, in wine
Of the world's life that thrill'd through the young veins
of thine,

In the splendid excess that knew nothing of waste ;

Thou did'st pledge her, 'mid horror and darkness, in
brine

Of the terrible waters that swept over thee

Bedrenching and beating : then, scap'd from the flood,
Didst thou stand by thy lady and look on that sea,
And pledge her again, and the cup was thy blood.

Thy lady ! thou know'st her : her eyes are the light

Of the world, and her heart is the fountain of joy,

And her lips are light-curv'd to a smile, never coy

But quickening and calming : and grand is her height

And stately her going, and wondrous the white

Of her brows ; and her name—She hath many a
name,

As Love, Truth, Life, Sorrow ; and whom she doth
claim

By the pledge he unshrinking redeems, he alone
(Oh, pride for dishonour ! oh, glory for blame !)
Shall know by which name she delights to be known.

TOO LATE.

I AM lying here with my head dropt low on your grave :
the sky

Is cloudless, pitiless blue : over all a quiet is shed,
A desolate quiet that broods like the passionless calm
and dead

Of a heart that ne'er quicken'd its beats at the sound
of beloved tread :

The sun strikes blindly down from its noonday height as
I lie

With my very soul cramped up in the spasms of its agony.

I feel the slow, slight shudder of growing grass at my ear
Stir through the dead-brown hair that was wont to be
so bright

For the royal crown of love, whose very shadow dropt
light

Around me until I stood made fair and transfigur'd
quite,

And my face as an angel's was—O God of mercy, I fear
The weight of my punishment now is greater than I can
bear.

My blood makes shuddering leaps as, alone in my dark,
I think

Of my own white stag whom the pitiless archers
wounded sore ;

My royal eagle whose plumes were all bedabbled with
gore ;

My strong one whose prideful locks of glory and
might they shore ;

And the iron enters into my soul, and I shiver and
shrink ;

And the bitter and awe of death is in the cup that I
drink.

O passionate outstretcht arms, ye may drop your warm,
white weight

On the cold, cold, silent grave, for he cannot feel you
strain

And beat against the impassable barriers to clasp him
again—

Scorch me, O glaring sun ! Drench me, O pitiless
rain !

Nothing can make me dull to the terrible cry, *Too Late !*
Or blind to the light that burns through the closed chrystal
gate.

O love, my beloved, I love you, I love you, I love you ;
I say

Again I love you, I love you ; but oh ! that awful sea

Of death rolls heavily in betwixt your soul and me,
And my fireful words are drown'd in the roar of its
waves, and she
Who utters them sinks and fails, her garments weight'd
with spray,
And hopes not the terrible tide will ebb out at the
breaking of day.

All through I lov'd you, dear heart ! Oh, had I but told
you so
When your forehead was flushen red with the shame of
your one, one sin ;
Nor open'd my soul's gate wide for pride to enter in ;
Nor turn'd my eyes away and left the devils to grin
O'er the grand young fallen soul they waited to drag
below ;
While I might have sav'd who lie with the Cain-curse on
me now.

Alas, my belov'd, my belov'd ! that I left you to sink in
the mire
Till the garments you wore, once fair, ah, scarcely a
vestige show'd
Of the stately, saintly white they wear in the kingdom
of God :
While the hand was folded away that could have helpt
if it would,

Ere the last fair string was wrencht from the breast of
the golden lyre,
And the voice into silence sank, that was even the angels'
desire.

Come back to me living and erring, and body and soul
shall be thrown

As a bridge across the abyss, and the gulf at your feet
be spann'd,

And I be right glad to perish so you may but safely
stand

Unsmircht from the brow to the feet in the light of
the holy land

Where the Shepherd in pastures of rest folds every saved
one ;

And no more may the eyeballs weep and no more may
the lips make moan.

GHOSTS.

DREAD you their haunting, O man of the world-wise
brow?

These ghosts, would you banish them all away from our
earth?

Alas ! when I was haunted, the loveless dearth
Never came over my soul that is over it now.

Oh for the beautiful spirits that haunted me
In the long, sweet hours of the pallid winter nights,
With the noiseless garb, and the tremulous angel-lights,
Lighting my soul, as the sun the desolate sea !

What have I done that your cherisht presence is gone
Away from my lonely hearthstone and loveless home ?
Vainly I stretch out imploring arms—ah ! come
As ye us'd to come, for now I am all alone.

Fair little one, with the violet eyes, oh pass !
Loving and bright as in other hours of grace,

When the beauty and light of your childly joysome face
Were to me as the presence of spring to the snow-
covered grass.

Statelier one, with the passionate ruddy gold
Crowning the beautiful head that is grand and proud,
Let the darkness be your garment, and not your shroud ;
Yea, shine, deep eyes, that never were quiet or cold.

And you with the gracious eyes, come bend them on mine,
Kiss away the furrows of pain from my face ;
Stay here, spirit, stay in this lonely place,
Presence that thrills like a strain of song divine !

You three us'd to come long ago, and smile
With a perfect measureless smile, that thro' and thro'
My soul sank, as to a rose's heart sinks dew :—
Why have you left me here so lonely, while

The working world is striving to keep me low,
With its ledgers and day-books dull on my aching sight ?
Come, for I need the fall of your garments white
To sweep the heavy earth-dust away from me now.

Come, my beloved, who are not three, but one ;
O childhood ! O girlhood ! O womanhood, sweet and
good ;
Each with its own most exquisite grace, that could
Fill the heart with delight in itself alone.

So unlike, that you seem not one, but three ;
How is it, Sweet ? I know not, indeed, but this
I know, that when you ceast haunting, my perfect bliss,
My great one joy, was taken away from me.

Were you not ever a spirit ? you could not have been
A mortal who bore the mortal title of wife ;
Yet this do I know, that I bear a changed life,
And in the churchyard a grave, that seems mine, is
green.

RESTITUTION.

HER face was marr'd with lines of pain and doubt :
Love came instead of death and swept them out.

Within her breast rag'd tempest strong and wild :
Love still'd it into calm with, *Peace my child.*

Her arms dropt nerveless after their fierce strain :
Love lifted them, and they were strong again.

Her eyes were dimm'd with bitter weeping's awe :
Love's holy salve anointed and they saw.

Her eyes were deafen'd with the ruthless cry
Of foes, upcrashing sharp against the sky :

Sweeter than silence came Love's voice divine,
Thou shalt arise again, for thou art Mine.

Oh, the good word sank down into her ears,
I will restore the locust-eaten years.

So, in Love's light her face transfigur'd shone,
And she grew very fair to look upon.

O vineyard, wasted once of beasts of prey,
Thou hast put forth thrice-glorious fruit to-day !

O jewel, flung before the trampling swine,
Love's hand resets thee in the crown divine !

Maker, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Thou
Hast seal'd her for Thine own from feet to brow :

And every noble pow'r and each bright grace
Flames in the perfect lustre of Thy face.

LOIS THE HEALER.

("Gifts of Healing.")

Lois the Healer pray'd
With soul uplift,
"O Love the Beautiful,
Give me this gift :
Comfort and help to be
Where'er I go,
Cool in the summer time,
Warmth in the snow."

So, on her tender lips,
Brow, cheek, and breast,
Love shed a baptism
Of strength and rest.
Thus on her way she goes,
Blessing and blest,
Till her life-day shall come
Into its west.

LOIS THE HEALER.

Men say, "She groweth old ;
See how her hair
Weareth the silver threads
Of time and care."
We, whom she healeth, know
Light through THE GATE
Shines on her gracious head
While she doth wait.

BELOVED, IT IS MORN !

BELOVED, it is morn !

A redder berry on the thorn,

A deeper yellow on the corn,

For this good day new-born.

Pray, Sweet, for me

That I may be

Faithful to God and thee.

Beloved, it is day !

And lovers work, as children play,

With heart and brain untir'd alway.

Dear love, look up and pray,

Pray, Sweet, for me

That I may be

Faithful to God and thee.

Beloved, it is night !

Thy heart and mine are full of light,

Thy spirit shineth clear and white,

God keep thee in His sight !

Pray, Sweet, for me

That I may be

Faithful to God and thee,

LOVE'S LEADING.

DID love deceive thee, dearest, when he brought
One so unworthy as this friend of thine
To thy heart's temple, yea, its inmost shrine,
And, through the veil of purple twin'd and wrought,
Bade her come in, fearing and doubting not,
And see the lamp's white flame that burns alway ;
And bade her care and trim it night and day ?
Oh, dreadful honour that she had not sought.
Oh, torment of the doubt and the surmise,
"How can I keep the sacred flame alight ?
My hand lacks skill and cunning, and my eyes
Are dim because they have not wept aright,
And my feet fail as his who walks by night—"
But Love has led me hither, and Love is wise.

WILD GRAPES.

I WAIT to meet the Master : a white fleece
 Of cloud is hanging in the evening sky ;
 A little paly gold lies tenderly
 About the sun's calm death-bed. Happy peace
 I know not, and my fellows whisper low,
 "What hast thou, O thou waiting one, to shew
 The One who cometh? For thy life's dear lease
 What hast thou paid?" And I—I do not know.
 Looks He for grapes? I have brought Him forth wild
 grapes ;
 And who shall crush from these wild grapes of mine,
 Meet for that cup of His, the royal wine?
 I know not, but from my soul's depth escapes
 My child-right cry to Him Who all things shapes,
 "The worlds are Thine, my Father, and I am Thine."

*"MAN IS NOT GOOD TILL HE CEASES
TO STRIVE AFTER GOODNESS."*

I.

THERE came one day a leper to my door :
 I shrank from him in loathing and in dread,
 But yet, remembering how old legends said
 That Jesus Christ so often heretofore
 Came in such guise to try His saints of yore,
 I brought him in, and cloth'd, and warm'd, and fed ;
 Yea, brake my box of precious nard, to pour
 Its costly fragrancy upon his feet.
 And when the house was fill'd with odour sweet,
 I lookt to see the loveliest face,—but o'er
 The leper came no change divine to greet
 My eager soul, which did such change entreat.
 And then I bow'd my head, and wept full sore—
 Ah ! the times change ; such visions come no more !

II.

With tear-dimm'd eyes I went upon my way,
 Past from the city to the April wood,

Where the young trees in trembling gladness stood ;
And once again my grieved heart grew gay.
Then did I see a little child at play ;
All the sweet April fountain of his blood
Tost out in joy, that brake in laughter-spray ;
And all my heart it lov'd him ; so I bent
To kiss his sunny mouth. Then through me went
That which I may not tell, nor can, to-day.
When was such healing with such wounding blent ?
Such pain supreme with such supreme content ?
The fires of God comfort as well as slay,
Else had I surely died, who am but clay.

IN MEMORIAM.

PRAISE to God for the fight so bravely fought !

Praise to God for the work so truly wrought !

Help to the weak-arm'd, strength to the feeble-kneed

O thou thinker of many a noble thought,

O thou doer of many a noble deed !

WHY?

I SAID "I will serve my God and man."
 So I took my life and wrencht it away
 From things it clung to, as life so can,
 The beautiful things of dawn and day
 And scent and music ; and in the gray
 Dim twilight kept it. But lo, it began
 To cry for its beautiful reds and blues,
 And moan'd and sobb'd as the moments ran
 Into hours and days, and I would not choose
 Aught else but the sad and sober hues.
 And my life was fain for the joyous shout
 Of youth and spring, and I husht it then
 And said, "Thou must serve thy God and men !
 So life, my life, be content without
 The things that thy fellows may not have ;
 Sell all and give to the poor, and crave
 No more, for the night-time cometh, and then
 No man can work : toil on and slave ;
 Thrice pitiless to thine own self be ;
 God's pity is enough for thee."

K

But I could not still its murmuring,
And at last, at last, I brought it back
To the dear old world, and bade it cling
To the beauty and brightness ; but, dull and slack,
Its tendrils dropped away from each thing
They were wont to clasp ; and I moan'd " Alack !
What matter to me if the sky be black
And the song-birds droop with broken wing?
Oh woe is me that I cannot care !
I sit dull-eyed, with faded hair,
And I cannot weep and I cannot sing,
And I care not to serve God or men,
I care not either to work or wait.—
The shadows are falling, it groweth late,
The night-time cometh, and soon : what then ? ”

AT EVENING.

I sit alone in the evening,
 Alone in the waning light ;
 And I wait for my lady's coming
 To comfort my soul to-night.

She comes in her noble beauty,
 In her tenderness and truth ;
 Her Love and Death have gifted
 With everlasting youth.

God's light on her gracious forehead ;
 God's peace in her joyous eyes ;
 God's comfort that goes out from her
 To cheer and to harmonise.

My life is full and busy,
 For its love runs deep and wide ;
 But here, in my lady's presence,
 It keepeth a sabbath-tide.

And softly the shadows of evening
On our blessed commune fall,
Till the children's voices call me
Away to the mirth-fill'd hall.

I go to play with the children,
And close to my heart I hold
That one little shining ringlet,
That soft little curl of gold.

I took it the night she lay dying
From the head on my breast that lay,
That precious memory-token
Of a love that is mine for aye.

She never will think I forget her,
Though our laughter ring loud and wild ;
She loves me to play with the children,
For she had the heart of a child.

ONE SWALLOW.

WE are very glad to-day and lift our praises,
 For, with eyes that lookt out long and anxiously,
 While the cutting wind blew sharp against our faces,
 This one swallow did we see.

O thou blessed swallow, matter not thou reach us
 Travel-faint and tir'd, with draggled plumage wet ;
 Through the winter-awe thou comest now to teach us
 Of a spring we know not yet.

Yes, to-day has set us free from that oppressive
 Going softly we had kept so very long,
 And we loose the strain of new-born joy excessive
 In a rain of tears and song.

But "*One Swallow does not make a Summer,*" say ye,
 "Earth in dreary twilight lieth veil'd as yet ;
 Many a weary wind must blow its blast ere may ye
 Seek the nascent violet."

Would ye quench with that drear adage joy that quickens
In a triumph through our whole lives once again ;
Till the spirit, shorn of comfort, quails and sickens
For your biting frost and rain ?

Nay, ye cannot take our holy joyaunce from us ;
Nay, ye cannot make the anointed eyesight dim
Of the trustful eyes that waited God's good promise
Which they had received of Him.

Ye have only seen to-day one swallow flying
From the sunny southern land where Summer is ;
But we know they come in flights with that undying
Summer greater far than this.

O the beauty and the joy that passeth telling !
O the time of singing birds that soon shall come,
When the trees put forth their leaves of fairest smelling,
And the brooks no more are dumb !

Oh, we take the blessed guerdon none receiveth
Save whose soul 'gainst doubting's bitter breath can
prove
That sweet grace which all things hopeth and believeth,
Not credulity, but love.

AFTER THE DAY-WORK.

DARLING, to-night I claim of you
 That which so often I have claim'd ;
 Look my whole spirit through and through
 With eyes that will not make asham'd
 As the calm eyes of angelhood,
 Never bedimm'd with weeping, would.

Dear, life is short and art is long,
 And I am weak who should be strong,
 Restless who perfect calm should know,
 And empty who should overflow :
 Just a tir'd child to you I come,
 O more than mother, more than home.

Kiss me upon the weary eyes,
 Tir'd after day-work's stress and strain ;
 I shall see clear when I arise,
 I shall be young and strong again ;
 For there was none but you could lull
 Thus into rest, my beautiful

LOVE-SONG.

I KNOW not whether to laugh or cry,
So greatly, utterly glad am I :
For one, whose beautiful love-lit face
The distance hid for a weary space,
Has come this day of all days to me
Who am his home and his own country.

What shall I say who am here at rest,
Led from the good things up to the best ?
Little my knowledge, but this I know,
It was God said "Love each other so."
O love, my love, who hast come to me,
Thy love, thy home, and thy own country.

A SONG OF THE UNSUNG.

I WOULD give anything
Of all that I hold most dear
If I could only sing
The beautiful songs I hear.
Who is it sings them? you say.
My darling, how can I tell?
I hear them the livelong day,
And often at night as well.
Songs of such comforting,
So tender and sweet and true,
That I would give anything
Could I only sing them for you.

SONNET.

I WAS Pygmalion's handiwork ; I grew
Into that beauty he had bidden be ;
He saw, and gaz'd, and lov'd exceedingly,
Yea, lov'd me into life. He little knew
I, who was his and he and myself too,
Had other life in store for him and me,
Art's life of splendid immortality,
A meed for ever paying, for ever due !
Why did he win for me this mortal breath
Why did the ivory sheen of face and limb
Flush into tender ruddiness for him ?
O fateful praying love that quickeneth !
Alas for the perisht pride, the fame-gold dim,
The gift, my life, that to his name was death.

OUTLEFT.

WHAT shall we do for her, our sister ?

What can we do for her, you and I ;

For, oh ! the sunshine hath somehow miss'd her,

For, oh ! the dewfall hath left her dry !

Never we felt it and yet we know it,

Anguish and wrong that her life doth prove ;

You, because you were born a poet,

I, because I was born your love.

Shall we not care for her greatly, seeing

How it was given to her to hold,

Down in the depths of her inmost being,

Love that could never be shown or told ?

Well does she know that loving is living,

Does not her heart with the thought half break ?

Sorely she longs for the joy of giving,

None will stoop down unto her and take.

Many would rise and call her blessed,
If she were one whose face could tell
That which her tongue leaves unexpressed,
That which her spirit knows so well.

Ay, if we could, such face we had won her,
Strong with her life's true emphasis ;
Pale for the stress of love's infinite honour,
And warm rose-red for its infinite bliss.

Oh, but our sister, our little sister,
What must we do for her, you and I ?
Seeing love's lips have never kiss'd her,
Seeing love's feet have past her by.

Oh, we will tell her we love her truly ;
Ask her to love and to care for us—
Will it seem strange to her, wonderfully,
Will she not think that we mock her thus ?

After the years of dull repression,
Folding her up in their darkness deep,
Blown on by spring-winds that rouse and freshen,
Will she not think that she walks in sleep ?

Opening her eyes, she will see around her,
Glory and beauty passing bright ;
Then she will know that Love has found her,
Love that is surely one with light.

And it shall be that, a little while hence,

 This little sister we care for thus,

Loosing her heavy veil of silence,

 Lifting her voice, will sing to us.

Sing to us, weep to us, laugh to us, render

 Love what is love's through all calms and stirs ;

Cling to our breast as a baby tender,

 And as a mother clasps us to hers.

A LETTER.

JOHN GRAHAM to the one who was his own
Sends greeting kind and half a broken ring,
And many her letters, and this last of his.

You know me, Alice Ker, and what I am,
So little, you may be surpris'd, I think,
To read the words that I have writ above,
As well as griev'd : I think you will be griev'd
A good deal ; for you had made up your mind
To play the ministering angel here,
And comfort me and help me faithfully :
And, knowing I was blinded where I lay
Asleep for weariness, on time's great shore,
You would have suffer'd me to take you up
Within mine arms, and rested on me blind,
And, seeing for me, guided me across
The waste, and set me where the rising sun
Should smite mine eyeballs into sight again.

This was your good intent, dear Alice Ker—
Ah, I am bitter—well, I will not be—

Nay, bounteous-brow'd and bounteous-hearted, nay,
I ask not for such largesse nor will take.

I bar'd my heart before you, but you thought
"Twas cover'd still : the veil was on your eyes,
Or had I let you come too near to see ?

Suppose the father of the prodigal,
Upon his way to meet the erring one,
Had chanc'd upon the elder son who ne'er
Had vex't his soul for harlot-wasted goods,
And fallen upon his neck and pardon'd him
The faults and follies he committed not,
How could the young man take such love as that ?
Had he not wrong'd his soul in taking it ?
I say that self-abasement, undeserved,
Is but one shape of the damned Protean lie.

So, Alice, is it now 'twixt you and me :
You fain would pardon, slay the fatted calf,
And bid me don the robe and ring and shoes.
I have not sinn'd and will not take such grace.

God never sets us level with His eyes,
Lest we go blind : but, in some shape of earth,
Veiling Himself, reveals Himself, or would
If we would, but, we willing not, He stands
Powerless, because He will not force our will.

What are these words betwixt us twain? Am I
A god? No—but, maybe, a veil of God,
And hence His revelation : yours, if so
You had will'd : you willing not, I take my way.

I lov'd you, dear, and love you passing well,
And yet I will not, cannot, say that life
Without you is a desert : God is here
And work ; and God and work are all enough.
And I will work just as I should have done
With you to work beside me, even you
Who cannot fail to live a noble life,
Being noble through and through : and so, good-bye,
God bless you : so, good-bye, dear Alice Ker.

*"DISCOURAGED BECAUSE OF THE
WAY."*

WITH the earth-dust on our raiment and the earth-tears
on our cheek,

Wrestling sorely in our passion, in our patience very
weak,

Far off, far off seems the city which from far we still
must seek.

Past the sunrise and the sunset glories of the east and
west,

Where the fair and good things ripen to the fairest and
the best,

Where the heart beats on untiring, and in serving is at
rest.

Oh, the never-ceasing conflict ! Oh, the stress on heart
and brain !

"Lord, deliver us from evil !" mournfully we cry again ;
But the underbreath of passion is "Deliver us from
pain !"

Look upon us, God and Father ! there is none to save
but Thee :

Look upon us, God and Father ! strengthen Thou each
feeble knee :

Thou canst make the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak,
the blind to see.

Shame on us, on us faint-hearted, pausing here to weep
and moan,

When beyond all thought's conceiving is the glory we
have known,

Seeing, Father, Thou didst love us into life who were
but stone.

Bid the weary silence break because of symphony and
song,

And the weary darkness pass because of glory white and
strong,

For the love that kills all coldness, and the right that
slays all wrong.

BY ME: IN ME.

I.

WHATEVER Thy will may be,
 Lord, let it be done by me.
 Oh, give me the joyful strength
 That fails not for journey's length ;
 And the swift, obedient feet
 That hasten their tasks to meet ;
 And the hands that, day by day,
 Delight in their work alway ;
 And the voice that is true to raise
 The burden of prayer and praise ;
 And the eyes that are swift to see,
 Because they are toucht of Thee ;
 And the heart of love to share
 Thy little ones' joy and care :
 Whatever Thy will may be,
 Lord, let it be done by me.

II.

Whatever Thy will may be,
 Lord, let it be done in me :

For now Thou hast laid me low
In the mystery of woe ;
I am shut from speech and song,
I am weak who was so strong,
And my soul is known of Thee
In her great adversity.
So I clasp Thy feet, and say,
"Thou hast given and taken away."
I know that I serve Thee so,
In lying all meek and low ;
I know Thou wilt deeply bless
In trusting and quietness ;
And I cry through the gracious gloom
Of the fig-tree's perisht bloom,
Whatever Thy will may be,
Lord, let it be done in me.

GRISILDIS.

I CURSE you, O my son's wife, Grisildis !

 You, lady, mild of brow and still of tongue,
 And beautiful and fruitful, with the young
Life's red upon your cheek, the gold that is
Light captive on your hair. O fleur-de-lys,
 (He call'd you so) fall with white petals wrung
 From their fair rest, and golden bosom stung
By piercing winds for the sun's tender kiss.

 Fallen he is now, my child, my Benjamin,
Who should be upright, little who should be great ;
You hated not his sin, nor made him hate,
 Whose lustral love had burn'd him white and clean.
Weep tears of blood for your soul-murder'd mate,
 O stupid lamb who lion should have been.

A VOW ANNULLED.

(Should '*honour rooted in dishonour*' stand?
And '*faith unfaithful*' keep me '*falsely true*'?)

NOT broken it is, but annull'd,
And for ever, the vow that I made
When reason and conscience were lull'd,
And I went on my way, unafraid
Alike of God's sun or His shade.

Did you know what it was to allure
My weak, weary soul, tempest-driven,
In the name of the pure from the pure,
In the name of her God from His heaven,
With its peace and its glory free-given?

You askt me to save you by love ;
And Love by that word you blasphem'd ;
Love the holy, that soareth above,
All saving that ever was dream'd :
By God above all things esteem'd.

They know not what Love is, who say
That any can love and yet lose
The right to look up all the day
Crown'd with lilies as holy ones use,
The Virgins the Bridegroom doth choose.

Love is strength, glory, pathos, and fire ;
All colours blent into one light ;
A beauty exceeding desire,
That sitteth with God on His height,
Superb in immaculate white.

I car'd not, you say, for your want—
I know, dear, how lonely you were ;
Yet, by the lone hearth God will grant
Souls possess in men's patience and pray'r
His presence, than lover's more fair.

Do you think that no anguish will come
Strong-wav'd o'er my soul when I see,
In the light of her lord's love and home,
A wife with her child on her knee,
To think what is lost unto me ?

But the anguish will pale at the last,
In the light of the glory begun ;
More great than her glory, who, past
The pain and the peril, has won
The bliss of embracing a son.

Most blessed, who deepliest feel
The awe and the torment, and search
Through tears for the hand that can heal
And cleanse from the terrible smirch,
And lay, pure, on the breast of His Church.

Forgive me, as He doth forgive ;
I hurt you and hinder'd ; yes, I
Who had vow'd for His service to live,
Was the worse and the weaker, I cry.
Good-bye, dear ! God bless you ! Good-bye !

TRANSLATIONS

THE CENTAUR.

(Englisht from Maurice de Guérin.)

WITHIN these mountain-caverns I was born,
 And, like this valley's river, whose first drops
 Fall from some rock that weeps within deep grot
 Fell the first moment of my new-made life
 Into the dark of a remote abode, 5
 Leaving its silentness untroubled still.

When comes our mother's hour of travailing,
 Towards the far caverns they retreat, and there,
 In wildest depths, where shadows thickest be,
 Bring forth, without a cry or murmuring, 10
 Fruit, silent as themselves. Their milk of might
 Doth feed us so that, with no languishing,
 Nor wrestling in a doubtful fight, we pass
 Life's first hard struggles ; yet, less soon we go
 Forth from our caves than from your cradles ye 15
 Because we hold that it behoveth best
 To keep intact and folden close and calm

The earliest seasons of existence,— days
Fill'd by the gods.

My growth had almost all
Its course within these shades where I was born. 20
The depth of my abode was sunk so far
Within the mountain's breast, that I had been
In ignorance of its outlet, but that winds,
Which swerv'd against the opening, flung therein
Their sudden troubles and their freshnesses. 25
And sometimes would my mother enter, wrapt
In valley-smells, or dripping from the waves ;
And those returns of hers, albeit she taught
Me not of stream or vale, but only was
Close-follow'd of their emanations, brought 30
Disquiet to my life, and, passionate,
I rov'd among the shadows. 'What is it,
This¹ outside, where my mother is self-borne
Away? What reigneth there of mystic might,
That calleth her so often to itself? 35
And what strange opposites that make her come
Thence every day emotion'd diversely?'
For she would come to me, now quick with joy,
Now sad and trailing like a wounded life.
I knew far-off that keen delight she brought 40

* By 'outside' I have translated de Guérin's '*ces dehors*,' of which Georges Sand says : ' Cette expression est étrange, peu grammaticale, peut-être ; mais je n'en vois pas de plus belle, et de plus saisissante pour rendre le sentiment mystérieux d'un monde inconnu.'

By certain tokens in her step ; 'twas shed
 From every look : I felt therefrom great thrills
 Of sympathy in all my breast. But most
 Her deep depressions mov'd me, leading me
 On, on, to guess towards what my spirit yearn'd. 45

There wrought a great disquietude in me ;
 I felt indeed and knew a force that might
 Not lonely dwell : and me betaking, now
 To shake mine arms, and now to gallop wild
 In the cave's spacious shadows, I essay'd 50
 To find, in the blows I struck on emptiness,
 Towards what my arms should stretch, towards what my
 feet
 Should bear me. . . .

I have coil'd mine arms since then
 Around the centaur's bust, the hero's frame,
 The oak-tree's trunk :—My hands have tried the rocks, 55
 The waters, and the innumerable plants,
 And the most subtle impressions of the air :—
 Oft in the blind, calm night I lift mine arms
 To augur of my way—

Melampus, see,
 How worn my feet ! and, nathless, though I am 60
 Frore in the great extremity of age,
 Come days when, in full light, upon the heights
 I feel the self-same agitations come
 That came in youth, and with the same impulse,

I toss mine arms, and use all left to me 65
Of that youth's swiftness.

Alternations came
Upon these troublings, of long quietude
From every restless movement. At such times
My being held no other sense than that
Of growth and all the gradual life that rose 70
Within my bosom ; lost were all the beats
Of passion, and, in absolute repose,
Unchanging drank I of the boon the gods
Shed through my being. O'er the secret charm
Of mere life-consciousness reign calms and shades. 75
O shades that in these mountain caverns dwell,
I owe that teaching to your silent care,
That hidden teaching which sustain'd me well :
And life I drank beneath your guardianship,
Pure from the very bosom of the gods ! 80
And when I left your shelter for the light
Of day, I stagger'd and I hailed it not
Because it seiz'd on me with violence,
Making me ebriate, as some fateful draught
Pour'd suddenly into my breast, had done. 85
And my whole being, till that moment's birth,
So simple and so calm, was shaken and lost
Much of itself, as scattered in the wind.

Melampus, who would'st know of the centaurs' life,
How did the gods' will guide thee unto me, 90

The oldest and the saddest of them all?
 Long time it is since I have liv'd their life ;
 No more I leave this mountain-top, where age
 Keeps me a prisoner ; now mine arrow-points
 But only serve to loose for me the plants 95
 Of clinging fibre :—now the quiet lakes
 Know me—the rivers have forgotten me.

Now will I tell thee something of my youth,—
 But woe is me ! for such remembrances
 From drained memory falling, trickle slow 100
 Like drops of a libation scant that fall
 From a poor, broken urn.

'Twas easy task
 To tell of my first years, because they were
 Perfect and calm : life only, simply life
 It was that fed me ; that is well retain'd 105
 And with no trouble told. A god, besought
 To tell his life, would tell it in two words.

Full of unresting motion was my life ;
 My footsteps knew no limit : in prideful strength
 I wander'd, stretching out in these wild wastes, 110
 On every side. One day, a vale unlov'd
 Of centaurs did I follow, and I spied
 A man, who walkt along the river's bank
 At the off side : the first whom I had seen,
 And I despis'd him, "for behold," I said, 115

"Half of my being ; short of step ; of gait
Uneasy, and his eyes measure the space
With sadness : 'tis a centaur overthrown
By the gods' curse, who traileth thus along."

Full often from the river-beds I took 120
Refreshing after day ; half of my frame
Hid in the waters, struggling to uprise
Above them, while the other rose serene,
And indolent arms were stretcht above the waves.
Thus, self-oblivious in the waters' heart, 125
I to their currents' impulse yielded me,
Which, carrying me afar, brought their wild guest
To all the changeful beauty of their banks.
How often, night-surpris'd, I follow'd them
Under the spreading shadows which bore down 130
Into the vale night-influence from the gods.
Then was my fierce existence mellow'd down
Till only a little consciousness of life
Was shed through all my being equally,
As, in the waters where I swam, the gleams 135
Of the great goddess who pervades the nights.

Melampus, mine old age bewaileth sore
The rivers ; peaceful and monotonous
For the most part, they follow their destiny
With calm beyond the centaur's, kindlier 140
Wisdom than man's : me, issuing from their breast,

Their gifts pursued, and stayed with me whole days,
And, scentlike, in sweet slowness past away.

A wild and blind inconstancy bare rule
Over my steps :—in midst of fierce career 145
My gallop would break to a sudden stay, as though
Close to my feet there shudder'd an abyss,
Or a god straight before me stood upright.
And these strange, sudden immobilities
Left me to realize a life deep-mov'd 150
By the weird ecstasy that came to me.
Of old have I cut branches in the woods
Which, running, I would lift above my head ;
So swift the swiftness of my running, it made
The motion of the leafage but a mere 155
Light quivering ; but, at the slightest pause,
The stir and wind came back upon the branch
Which wail'd again beneath it. Thus my life
In those sharp interruptions of the race
I dasht impetuously along the vales, 160
Shudder'd strong shuddering all through my breast
I heard it bubbling, rushing, rolling out
The fire caught in the space that I had clear'd,
And my quick sides beat struggling against the waves,
That inward prest them ; tasting in such storm 165
A pleasure which the sea-shores only know,
Of holding in and losing none of a life,
Of a life wrought to its very highest highth.

Nathless, with head bow'd to the wind that brought
The cool to me, I saw the mountain-tops 170
Made distant in few moments, and the trees
Rootfast to the breast of earth, moving alone
In branches sighing to the wind's light touch.

"I only," would I say, "have movement free ;
I, at my own will, bear my life along 175
From valley's end to end : oh, happier I
Than torrents falling down the mountain sides,
To reascend no more : my footsteps' tramp
Is grander than the plaining of the woods,
Or the waves' clash : the centaur's echo 'tis 180
Who, wandering, is self-guided."

Thus, the while

Below I panted for the glorious race,
Above I felt its pride, and turned my head
And paus'd to look upon my smoking flanks.

Youth, as I think, is like to the green wood 185
Tormented of the wind : on every side.
Passion'd with life's rich gifts, and, evermore
Some murmur deep reigns in her foliage.
Thus, living with the waves' abandonment,
And ceaselessly in-breathing Cybele 190
In valley-beds or on the mountain-tops,
I bounded forth, like a blind life unchain'd.
But when the night, filled with the gods' deep calm,
Found me upon the hills' acclivities,

She led me to the entrance of the caves, 195
And lull'd me, as she lulls the waves, to rest ;
Leaving in me those undulations light
Which, holding sleep aloof, brake not repose.
Thus, at the entrance coucht of my retreat,
My limbs hidden within the cave, my head 200
'Neath the bare sky, I watcht the shadows play.
Then the strange life that had bedrenched me
All through the day, fell from me drop by drop,
Back to the restful bosom of Cybele ;
As, after storm, the latest drops of rain 205
That leaves had kept, fall down to join the waters.

Melampus, it is said the sea-gods leave
In shadow-time their deep-laid palaces,
And, seated on the headlands, watch the waves.
Thus watcht I, having at my feet a stretch 210
Of life, most like unto a drowsy sea ;
And, to existence clear and full brought back,
It seem'd to me the moment after birth,
And that the waters, in whose womb I was
Conceiv'd, had left me on the mountain-top, 215
As some live dolphin left on shifting sands,
Forgotten there by Amphitrite's waves.

Mine eyes ran freely o'er all distances,
Gaining, unstrain'd, the very farthest bounds.
Like shores for ever moist the western hills 220
Were quick with gleams the shadows might not blot

Away, in whose pale clearness there uprose
The pure and naked summits : there I saw
Descend at times the all-solitary Pan,
At times the choir of hid divinities ; 225
Or else some mountain nymph would pass, whose soul
Was spell-bound by the night : the eagles too
Of Mount Olympus soar'd across the highth
Of the great sky, and vanished in those
Far constellations ; or, 'neath the sacred woods, 230
The spirit of the gods, disquieted,
Would trouble suddenly the old oak's calm.

Melampus, who wouldst follow Wisdom, That
Which is the Science of the Will Divine,
And wand'rest 'mid the peoples, like to one 235
The Fates mislead—in these abodes there is
A stone which, at the lightest touch, gives out
A sound like some sweet instrument's strings that break ;
And men relate that, when Apollo drave
His flock into these deserts, he laid down 240
His lyre upon the stone, and left thereon
This melody : thus, O Melampus, thus,
The gods, in wandering, have laid their lyres
Upon these stones—none hath forgot it there !

In those my times of watching in the caves, 245
I sometimes made myself believe I might
Surprise the dreams of sleeping Cybele ;
And that the mother of the gods, betray'd

By those her dreams, might let some secrets fall.
But nothing did I ever hear save sounds 250
That melted in the breath of night ; or words
As the stream's babbling inarticulate.

" Macareus," said great Cheiron once to me,
Our ancient, whom I followed, " how diverse
Are our pursuits ; my daily care to find 255
The secrets of the plant, and thou—thou art
Like those poor mortals, who have haply found
Within the woods or on the waves, and borne
Unto their lips some fragments of the reed
Which Pan had broken, and, inhaling thence 260
A wild, fierce spirit, or by frenzy seiz'd,
Cross waters, lose themselves in mountain life,
Restless and borne by a purpose all unknown.
The Scythian mares, beloved of the winds,
Are not more fierce than these, and not more sad 265
At eventide when the North Wind has fail'd.
Macareus, seek'st to know the gods and whence
Have issued men and lower animals
And principles of universal fire ?
Alas ! old Ocean, father of all things, 270
Fast holdeth all these secrets in his breast ;
And, singing, his surrounding nymphs describe
Eternal choir before to him to conceal
That which might chance escape from out his lips
By chance half-open—Mortals that have mov'd 275

The gods by their virtue have receiv'd of them
Lyres that should ravish all the people's hearts,
Or new seeds to enrich them ; but alas,
Nothing from their inexorable lips !

Apollo taught me in my youth to seek 280
The lore of plants ; to spoil their veins of saps
Beneficent : since then, I ever keep
Me faithful to this mountainous abode,
Restless, and yet, without surcease employ'd
In quest of simples, and in making known 285
The virtues I discover. Dost thou see
From this the summit bald of Cæta ? Look,
Alcides 'spoiled it for his funeral pyre.
The demi-gods, the children of the gods,
Macareus, spread the lions' spoil upon 290
Their pyres and burn them on the mountain-tops :—
Earth's poisonous essences infect the blood
Receiv'd from the immortal gods ; and we,
Centaurs, begotten of a mortal rash,
Within the womb of a mist shapen like 295
A goddess, what, alas ! of help should we
Expect from Jove who, with his thunder-bolt
Did unto nought the father of our race ?
The vulture of the gods eternally
Teareth the entrails of the artisan 300
Who made the first man ; O Macareus, men
And centaurs know for authors of their blood

The pilferers of the immortals' right :
 And, may be, all that stirs beyond themselves
 Is but a something stolen from them ; a trace 305
 Of their own nature, borne like flying seed
 On the all-powerful breath of destiny.

They say that Ægeus, Theseus' father, hid
 Chosen memorials whereby his son
 Might one day know his birth.—The jealous gods 310
 Have buried somewhere all the witnesses
 Of all things' source ; but to what ocean's shore,
 Tell me, Macareus, have they roll'd the stone
 That keeps them cover'd ? ”

This the wisdom was

Whither great Cheiron led me : all reduc'd 315
 To age the most extreme, he nourish'd yet
 The loftiest thoughts : his breast, yet bold, scarce
 droopt

Upon the flanks he rose serene above
 Slight-bending like the tempest-sadden'd oak !
 His going scarcely toucht by stress of years. 320
 One had suppos'd he kept the relics still
 Of immortality, the gift receiv'd
 From great Apollo, and giv'n him back again.
 For me, Melampus, into old age I sink,
 Calm as the constellations sink to rest. 325
 Still have I strength enough to gain the highth
 Of rocks, where oft I linger : there, maybe,

To look upon the wild, unquiet clouds,
Or watch the rainy Hyades arise
Above the horizon, or the Pleiades,
Or great Orion : yet I know full well
That I am minishing and losing me
Like a snow-heap floating on the waters' breast ;
And soon I go to mingle with the streams
Which flow to the great bosom of the earth.

330

*TO JENNY.**(From the French of Victor Hugo.)*

YESTERDAY, darling of mine, a twelvemonth old !
 Happy you babble as, under the manifold
 Delicate leafage that lies on the dear Spring's breast,
 The year's new birdlets, opening their strange, wide
 eyes,

Cheep and twitter from out the warmth of the nest,
 For the joy of the young plumes' growth and of life's
 surprise.

O rose-lipt Jenny of mine, in those big books
 Whose pictures are worth your crowings and happy looks,
 The books I must suffer your fingers to crumple or tear ;
 There is many a beautiful poem, but none so rare
 As you, my poem, when, catching sight of me,
 Your whole little body thrills and leaps with glee.
 The greatest men for writing have written ne'er

A better thing than the thought a-dawn in your eye,
 And the musing strange and vague of one who scans
 The earth and man with an angel's ignorance.

Ay, Jenny, God's not far off when you are nigh.

FROM VICTOR HUGO'S "MAZEPPA."

PART II.

THUS, when a mortal on whom his God is outpour'd
indeed,

Is bound on thy fateful croupe, O genius, fiery steed,
He struggles in vain ; with a bound, untoucht of his
hand or heel,

From the real thou bearest him forth, whose gates burst
and break as they feel

Thy feet, feet of steel.

Thou clearest the deserts with him, and the hoary tops
of the proud

Old hills of strength, crossest seas, and beyond the depths
of cloud

Where darkness heavily lies ; and, awak'd by thy foot-
steps' sound,

A thousand spirits impure in their legion close press
round

Thy traveller bound.

In one flight on thy wings of flame he reaches and sees
the whole

Wide fields of the possible there stretcht out, and all
realms of the soul ;

He drinks from the river eternal : in storm-night or star-
night now

His locks with the locks of comets commingled, all
flaming glow

On the firmament's brow.

The six moons of Herschel he sees ; the ring of old
Saturn there ;

And the pole that bends round her brow the nightly
Aurora fair ;

All he sees ; the ideal horizon, the limitless world's, in
his sight

Moveth on till it knoweth no limit, displac'd through the
darkness and light

By thy untir'd flight.

And who, saving only the demons and angels, may know
or may dream

What he suffers in following thee, or guess the strange
lightnings that gleam

On his eyes, and the scorching and burning of many a
fiery spark,

And how, in the night, those cold wings shall strike at
his brow in the dark,

And no one shall mark.

Affrighted he cries, but in vain : relentless, thy flight will
not fail,

The flight that o'erwhelms him and crushes ; exhausted,
and gasping, and pale,

Each step thou dost take seems to hollow his tomb and
he sinks in affright ;

Till the end comes—he runs, and he flies, and he falls—
and he rises upright,

A king in his might.

THE WANDERER.

(From the English of Cynewulf.)

STILL the lone one and desolate waits for his Maker's
ruth—

God's good mercy, albeit so long it tarry, in sooth :
Careworn and sad of heart, on the watery ways must he
Plough with the hand-graspt oar—how long?—the rime-
cold sea :

Tread thy paths of exile, O Fate, who art cruelty.

Thus did a wanderer speak, being heart-full of woe, and all
Thoughts of the cruel slayings, and pleasant comrades'
fall.

Morn by morn I, alone, am fain to utter my woe ;
Now is there none of the living to whom I dare to show
Plainly the thought of my heart : in very sooth I know
Excellent is it in man that his breast he straitly bind,
Shut fast his thinkings in silence, whatever he have in
his mind.

The man that is weary in heart, he never can fate with-
stand ;

The man that grieves in his spirit, he finds not the
helper's hand.

Therefore the glory-grasper full heavy of soul may be.
So, far from my fatherland, and mine own good kinsmen
free.

I must bind my heart in fetters, for long, ah ! long ago,
The earth's cold darkness cover'd my giver of gold
brought low ;

And I, sore stricken and humbled, and winter-sadden'd,
went

Away o'er the frost-bound waves to seek for the dear con-
tent

Of the hall of the giver of rings ; but far nor near could
I find

Who felt the love of the mead-hall, or who with comforts
kind

Would comfort me, the friendless. 'Tis he alone will know,
Who knows, being desolate too, how evil a fere is woe.

For him the path of the exile, and not the twisted gold ;

For him the frost in his bosom, and not earth-riches old.

Oh, well he remembers the hall-men, the treasure be-
stow'd in the hall ;

The feast that his gold-giver made him, the joy at its
highth, at its fall :

He knows who must be forlorn for his dear lord's coun-
sels gone

When sleep and sorrow together are binding the lonely
one ;

When himthinks he clasps and kisses his leader of men,
and lays

His hands and head on his knee, as when, in the good
yore-days,

He sat on the throne of his might, in the strength that
wins and saves—

But the friendless man awakes, and he sees the yellow
waves,

And the sea-birds dip to the sea, and broaden their wings
to the gale,

And he sees the dreary rime, and the snow commingled
with hail.

Oh, then are the wounds of his heart the sorer much for
this,

The grief for the lov'd and lost made new by the dream
of old bliss.

His kinsmen's memory comes to him as he lies asleep,

And he greets it with joy, with joy, and the heart in his
breast doth leap ;

But out of his ken the shapes of his warrior-comrades
swim

To the land whence seafarers bring no dear old saws for
him.

Then fresh grows sorrow and new to him whose bitter part
Is to send o'er the frost-bound waves full often his weary
heart.

For this do I look around this world, and cannot see
Wherefore or why his heart should not grow dark in me,

When I think of the lives of the leaders, the clansmen
mighty in mood ;
When I think how sudden and swift they yielded the
place where they stood.
So droops this mid-earth and falls, and never a man is
found
Wise ere a many winters have girt his life around.
Full patient the sage must be, and he that would counsel
teach
Not over-hot in his heart, nor over-swift in his speech ;
Nor faint of soul nor secure, nor fain for the fight nor
afraid ;
Nor ready to boast before he know himself well array'd.
The proud-soul'd man must bide when he utters his vaunt,
until
He know of the thoughts of the heart, and whitherward
turn they will.
The prudent must understand how terror and awe shall
be,
When the glory and weal of the world lie waste, as now
men see
On our mid-earth, many a where, the wind-swept walls
arise,
And the ruin'd dwellings and void, and the rime that on
them lies.
The wine-halls crumble, bereft of joy the warriors lie,
The flower of the doughty fallen, the proud ones fair to
the eye.

War took off some in death, and one did a strong bird bear
Over the deep ; and one—his bones did the grey wolf
share ;

And one was hid in a cave by a comrade sorrowful
fac'd.—

Oh, thus the Shaper of men hath laid the earth all waste,
Till the works of the city-dwellers, the works of the
giants of earth,

Stood empty and lorn of the burst of the mighty
reveller's mirth.

Who wisely hath mus'd on this wallstead, and ponders
this dark life well,

In his heart he hath often bethought him of slayings
many and fell,

And these be the words he taketh, the thoughts of his
heart to tell.

Where is the horse and the rider ? Where is the giver of
gold ?

Where be the seats at the banquet ? Where be the hall-
joys of old ?

Alas for the burnisht cup !—for the byrned chief to-
day !

Alas for the strength of the prince ! for the time hath
past away—

Is hid 'neath the shadow of night, as it never had been
at all.

Behind the dear and doughty there standeth now a
wall,

A wall that is wondrous high, and with wondrous snake-work wrought.—

The strength of the spears hath fordene the earls and hath made them naught ;

The weapons greedy of slaughter, and she, the mighty Weird ;

And the tempests beat on the rocks, and the storm-wind that maketh afeard ;

The terrible storm that fetters the earth, the winter-bale,

When the shadow of night falls wan, and wild is the rush of the hail,

The cruel rush from the north, which maketh men to quail.

Hardship-full is the earth, o'erturn'd when the stark Weirds say ;

Here is the passing of riches, here friends are passing away ;

And men and kinsfolk pass, and nothing and none may stay ;

And all this earth-stead here shall be empty and void one day.

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